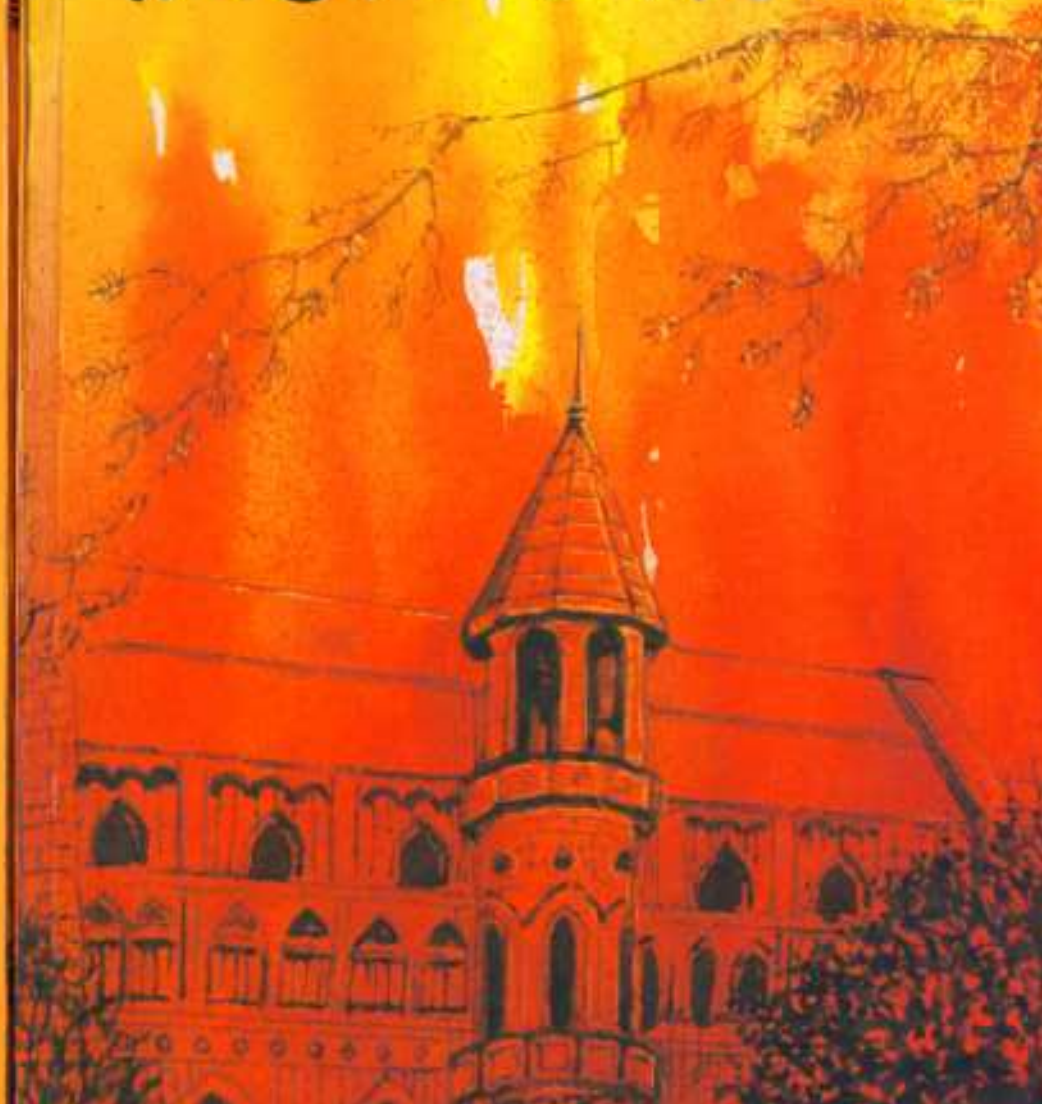


The volume introduces to children those institutions which have figured in our historical, cultural, social and national development and have, therefore, become famous. Each chapter gives the history of the institute, its work, the personalities involved in its genesis, growth and activities. The institutes have made a valuable contribution in specific fields including Indological studies.



A CBT PUBLICATION

# GREAT INSTITUTIONS



# GREAT INSTITUTIONS

Illustrated by B.G. Varma



Children's Book Trust, New Delhi

This collection has largely been made from entries in the Category Great Institutions in the Competition for Writers of Children's Books organized by Children's Book Trust.

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Text typeset in 13/16 pt. Garamond

EDITED BY GEETA MENON

ISBN 81-7011-882-4

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Published by Children's Book Trust, and  
printed at its Indraprastha Press, Nehru House,  
4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi.

# The Theosophical Society

By  
Scharada Bail

**T**HE river Adyar runs through Chennai and joins the sea. This estuarine stretch is now a part of the hustle and bustle of modern Chennai, spanned by an ever busy Thiru-Vi-Ka Bridge (named after Thiru V. Kalyanasundaram, a poet of contemporary Tamil literature) with its traffic of cars, buses, cycles, autorickshaws, and also cows and goats. The Adyar locality around the bridge is a busy residential and business area, with banks, hospitals and shopping centres close to each other.

### Beginning

On the right bank of the river, as it enters the sea, is a thickly-wooded estate. Stretching along the bank, is a large expanse of dark green with a single building rising out of the trees quite close to the sea. This estate houses the World Headquarters of the Theosophical Society.

To people living in Chennai, the Theosophical Society and its adjoining suburb of Besant Nagar are familiar landmarks. The Society is often referred to as *Ala Maram* (in Tamil), or banyan tree, because amongst the several splendid banyan trees in its extensive grounds is a towering one about 450 years old. Although the Society, and the names of its leaders like Annie Besant and Henry Steel Olcott, are known to the people in Chennai, most of us are not fully aware that the Society represents an international movement that draws followers in many countries.

The theosophical movement can be said to have begun with Madame H.P. Blavatsky. Born in Russia into a noble family in 1831, she became aware very early in life of spiritual forces guiding and guarding her. This awareness led her take up a life of travel in 1849, in the course of which she visited India and Tibet.

Here she met holy men whom she reckoned as her teachers or masters. With their blessings and inspiration, she decided to start a philosophic-religious organization in order to bring about spiritual awareness.

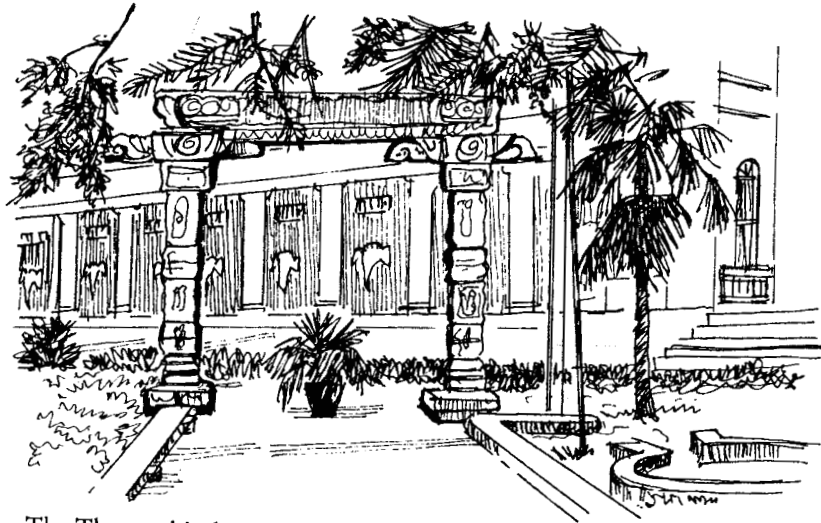
In 1874, Blavatsky met Henry Steel Olcott at spiritualist seances in Vermont, U.S.A. Given the honourable rank of Colonel in the Northern Army during the American Civil War of 1861, Olcott had come to Vermont as a journalist to investigate and write about these seances.

Their meeting was the beginning of the association between them that led them, with several others, to form the Theosophical Society in New York in the year 1875.

### Aims

The word 'theosophy' is made of two Greek words—'theos', meaning God, and 'sophia', meaning wisdom. It can be understood from this that the theosophists seek Divine Wisdom. The objectives of the Society are set out as follows:

- To form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.



The Theosophical Society

- To study comparative religion, philosophy and science.

- To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man.

In 1879, the World Headquarters of the Theosophical Society moved to Bombay. From here Blavatsky and Olcott toured India, giving lectures in various cities and towns. They attracted a number of followers in Chennai.

This was the time when Ooty or Ootacamund was being developed as a hill station by the British. Large estates in Chennai, then called Madras, were being sold by the Britishers who wished to move to the cooler climate of the hills.

Hearing that an extensive estate known as the Huddleston Property was coming up for sale along the banks of the Adyar river, the founders of the Theosophical Society bought the land and property for the organization, with help from their friends and supporters in Chennai.

This green estate filled with mango, banyan, casuarina and neem trees, became the permanent headquarters of the Theosophical Society. Although it began as a 28-acre plot, further acquisition of land by the Society over the subsequent years has resulted in the present estate of 249 acres.

Blavatsky passed away in London in 1891. Olcott continued as the first President of the Society till his death in 1907. They left the Society in the hands of its dynamic new President, Dr. Annie Besant, who made India her own.

Blavatsky had primarily been a spiritual leader, urging her followers to seek Divine Wisdom. Olcott was an enthusiastic organizer who laid the foundation for a strong organizational structure in the Society.

The plight of the poorest classes in India moved Olcott and made him determined to work for their welfare. Recognizing that educating them was essential for them to become free of their poverty, he started a number of free schools.

Most of these schools were taken over by the government in later years. One of them, the Olcott Memorial School which was founded by Olcott in 1894, functions from the Society's premises and continues to provide education to needy children.

### Annie Besant

Annie Besant was a leader who held strong social and political beliefs, apart from a deep interest in spirituality. During her time, the Society received the inspiration it needed to involve itself in the burning political issue of the day—India's independence from British rule.

Annie Besant had been born Annie Wood, in London, in 1847. She had been the leader of the Freethought movement in her youth, fighting against religious intolerance and taking up the cause of freedom of the press in the time of Queen Victoria.

Annie Besant



In 1885, she became associated with the Fabian socialists such as George Bernard Shaw and Sydney and Beatrice Webb and joined the Fabian Society. Shortly after this, she was asked to review Blavatsky's book, *The Secret Doctrine*. She was so deeply impressed by the book that she decided to meet the author. As a result of the meeting, she joined the Theosophical Society.

On November 16, 1893, Annie Besant had landed in India but as early as 1875 she had championed the cause of India in one of her pamphlets called, 'England, India and Afghanistan'.

From the time she set foot on the Indian soil,

Annie Besant felt she had 'come home' and she began making speeches lamenting the vanishing greatness of India and its oppression by the British.

In 1898, she founded the Central Hindu College in Benares, which later became the famous Benares Hindu University. She was very concerned about creating an awareness in the youth and she began a movement called, 'The Sons and Daughters of India'.

In 1917, Annie Besant was elected the President of the Indian National Congress. She had been vigorously opposing British policy and demanding Home Rule for some years. She had worked hard to integrate and organize the Congress by bringing together the differing followers of Lokmanya Tilak and Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

In 1918, the Indian Boy Scouts Movement emerged under her leadership, wherein boy scouts learnt to take pride in Indian songs and costumes. Baden-Powell later awarded her the 'Silver Wolf', the highest honour of the scouts, for her contribution to the Scouts Movement and made her Honorary Scout Commissioner for India.

During her presidency of the Indian National Congress, she continued to organize activities and chaired meetings of Congress committees on many issues. Her insistence on the constitutional method of opposing British rule clashed with Mahatma Gandhi's call to the people for non-cooperation with the British Government. As a result of this, she lessened the pace of her political activities. She

continued to remain a forceful leader of the Theosophical Society.

Although Blavatsky, Olcott and Annie Besant were foreign to India, their attachment to India was deep and profound. This found expression in different ways. Blavatsky's teachings reflect the teachings behind all religions. She was addressed as 'Amma' (mother in Tamil) by some of her closest friends and followers. Her affection for her pupils and their families was not a condescending one.

To Annie Besant, India was her true home. From the very beginning, she adopted an Indian style of dress. She worked and ate her meals sitting cross-legged on the floor. She studied Indian philosophy and wrote illuminative books on Hindu religious texts which can guide us even today.

### **Kalakshetra**

Following the death of Annie Besant in 1933, Dr. G.S. Arundale was elected President of the Theosophical Society in 1934. A teacher by vocation, Arundale had been the principal of the Training College for Teachers in the National University which had been established in Madras under the auspices of the Theosophical Society. During the time he was President, he conducted a World Congress of Theosophy at Geneva and founded a World Federation of Young Theosophists. Arundale



married another theosophist, the tremendously gifted and artistic, Rukmini Devi, who set up the Kalakshetra School for Bharatha Natyam. This institution, close to the Theosophical Society premises, is a very important centre for learning dance and music. It also houses in its campus the Besant Theosophical School.

Arundale died in 1945 and a succession of illustrious presidents looked after the affairs of the Society in the later years. Some of these include C. Jinarajadasa, N. Sri Ram, John Coats and Radha Burnier.

The grounds and memorials of the Theosophical Society are endowed with a natural beauty and serenity that makes them one of Chennai's famous destinations. Visitors are permitted to go to the Society grounds during specified hours, when students, tourists or ordinary people in search of peace and tranquillity, can be seen walking around the Society grounds.

The property of the Theosophical Society consists of the estate which is bisected by the Besant Avenue, an important road leading to the suburb of Besant Nagar.

### Abode of faiths

To the original Huddleston Gardens were added properties named Blavatsky, Besant, Damodar and

Olcott gardens, in that order. Smaller pieces of land, such as the Alsace grove and Besant grove were also added. The original estate now houses the headquarters building, the administrative offices and the famous Adyar Library. Temples and shrines of all the major living religions of the world are placed around in the estate, which also has some private residences of the theosophists, a bank, post-office, clinic and other such essential amenities.

The Besant and Damodar gardens house the Theosophical Publishing House and the Vasanta Press. These can be approached by crossing the Besant Avenue. The Olcott Memorial School has a large attendance of children from the fishermen and other underprivileged communities of the nearby Urur village.

The Krishnamurti Foundation of India, an organization that propagates the message of the philosopher J. Krishnamurti, runs a school in Damodar gardens. C.W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant had recognized J. Krishnamurti, when he was still a boy, as a visionary and philosopher. Although he trod his own path later and became a spiritual leader and thinker with a distinct view, his ties with Annie Besant remained strong.

The Theosophical Publishing House and the Vasanta Press publish books, pamphlets and articles by the leaders of the movement. They also bring out quarterly and monthly issues of their journals, *Adyar Newsletter*, *The Theosophist* and *Wake up India*.

The headquarters building is famous for its Main Hall where the central theme of the Theosophical Society, "There is no Religion higher than Truth", has been graphically portrayed in the centre of the hall. On the four walls, panels containing the symbols of eighteen different faiths are displayed. The atmosphere is one of peace and serenity, free from conflict.

### Library, shrines

The Adyar Library, founded by Olcott in 1886, is considered as one of the greatest Oriental libraries in the world. It has many rare and valuable books including palm-leaf manuscripts in Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese and other languages. A large number of research scholars and students enjoy the facilities of this library which is a meeting point of Eastern and Western thought and philosophy.

There is a Social Welfare Centre near the main gate of the Society, where there is a creche for children of poor working mothers. Health education, immunization and nutrition for the children who attend the creche are the welfare activities undertaken by this centre.

Shrines of different faiths are to be found in the serene grounds of the Theosophical Society. There is a Buddhist shrine, a Church of St. Michael for Christian services, a Hindu temple, a mosque

modelled on the beautiful Pearl Mosque in Delhi, a Zoroastrian fire temple and a Sikh temple.

Conventions and seminars are held regularly at the Theosophical Society and delegates on these occasions are accommodated at a guest house called Leadbeater Chambers or the New Quadrangle. Food is provided by Leadbeater Chambers and the *Bhojanasala*, a big kitchen near the rooms of the Old Quadrangle which prepares typical South Indian vegetarian dishes.

### Flora and fauna

The Society sells plants from its well-stocked nursery and even some vegetables and vegetable produce such as tamarind. Walking through the grounds, one notices the profusion of plants and trees of thousands of species, right next to the neat concrete paths. Mango, 'jamun', banyan, neem, coconut and 'gulmohar' trees abound here, and the forest floor is a green carpet of interwoven plants and creepers. They flourish undisturbed; it is remarkable and wonderful that right in the midst of Chennai's concrete jungle, this green haven's existence is helping to clean the air, and provide peace and quiet, and shelter to many small forms of life that have had their environment taken over by man. On the Theosophical Society estate can be found deer, mongoose, jackals, innumerable squirrels and chameleons, and a variety of birds

from owls to kingfishers, from migratory birds that visit the Adyar estuary to sweet-voiced tailor birds, babblers and bulbuls.

The Garden of Remembrance, which is on the edge of a forest close to the meeting point of the river and the sea, holds the ashes of past leaders. Trees, flowering hedges and pools with lotuses and lilies enhance the tranquillity that pervades this area.

### **Abiding relevance**

Born in the nineteenth century, the Theosophical Society is an institution the history of which is tied up with the history of our country. Although it is more than a hundred years since its founders first conceived of the Society, the objectives they set out then have relevance for us today. We need to be reminded of the universal brotherhood of humanity, of the unity among us which is a part of the greater unity of all life, and indeed our unity with God.

A desire to search for Truth and a concern for ethics and humanity are characteristics of the theosophical creed. In recent times, theosophists have aligned against cruelty, spoken out for conservation of the environment, and other issues in the journals and publications of the movement. The values represented by the Theosophical Society help us to maintain a sense of balance in the midst of the current scientific and social changes.

The movement's founder, Blavatsky says: "It is easy to become a theosophist. Any person of average intellectual capacities, and a leaning towards the metaphysical, or pure, unselfish life, who finds more joy in helping his neighbours than receiving help himself, one who is ever ready to sacrifice his own pleasure for the sake of other people and who loves Truth, Goodness and Wisdom for their own sake, not for the benefit they may confer—is a theosophist."

The roots of the banyan tree go deep into the ground. Its branches spread and put out aerial roots to further strengthen the tree. It grows and shelters many. The Adyar Theosophical Society is rooted in Eastern philosophy and mysticism. It has sheltered and nurtured men and women who have contributed a great deal to our country and society. It guides and comforts us.

# The Lalbagh Botanical Garden

By  
Mala Kumar

JUHI sat down, panting, under the canopy of the 450-year-old Kempegowda Tower, built by and named after the founder of Bangalore in Karnataka. The fourteen-year-old girl had just run up a rocky elevation to reach this point. All around the base of the hill was a carpet of green, formed by the tops of the innumerable trees of the Lalbagh Botanical Garden. Juhi was awestruck by the panoramic view. She just could not believe that she was sitting on a rock which was 3,000 million years old! The board put up by the Government said this peninsular gneiss, formed by the complex pattern and proportion of granite, quartz and mica, had been declared a national geological monument. The board indicated that the great Himalayas were a baby in comparison to this rock formation!

Juhi looked around her happily. In front of her was a busy road of Bangalore. The Lalbagh Botanical Garden is six kilometre from the city railway station and eight kilometre from the cantonment railway station. Juhi could see a little bit of the Lalbagh lake

when she turned around. How she wished she could catch a glimpse of at least one of the several species of migratory birds that came there! To the left, a tree-lined avenue led to the famous Glass House—the jewel of Lalbagh.

### A 'living library'

The sight, the silence and the size of Lalbagh filled the young girl's heart with a sense of wonder. She turned to a tourist guide talking to a group of foreigners nearby and asked where she could get more information about Lalbagh.

"I can tell you a lot of things myself," he offered helpfully, "you can also get information from the library there."

Juhi headed straight towards the library. Crossing neat lawns and well-kept flower beds, she finally reached the Dr. M.H. Memorial Botanical Library. There she learnt exactly what a botanical garden meant. Just as a conventional library has a well-catalogued collection of books, the grounds of a botanical garden comprise living plants of different kinds from various climates and countries, each of them properly labelled with information about its name, nativity, family and use. A botanical garden is an institution meant primarily for advancement of botany and conservation and dissemination of knowledge about plants to people.

Among other functions, the Lalbagh Botanical Garden introduces new plants of botanical, economical and horticultural interest. These plants have to be acclimatized, in other words, the plants have to be got used to the local conditions, and then propagated.

The garden aids the development of the horticultural industry in the State. It is the fountainhead of scientific, technical and popular information about plants and their culture. It serves as an increasingly valuable supplement to nature study and botanical work in local schools and colleges. Over the years, Lalbagh has also become a centre of investigation in pure and applied botany. Lastly, Lalbagh helps to establish places of beauty, to provide healthy recreation to the public and to develop a sense of aesthetics among people. Home gardening, too, gets a boost from Lalbagh.

Lalbagh did not start off as a botanical garden. Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysore, had a garden laid out as a royal retreat in 1770. He obtained plants from Delhi, Multan, Lahore and Arcot and created a 40-acre expanse of pleasure garden. Legend has it that when Hyder once took his little son, Tipu Sultan, to the garden, the child exclaimed spontaneously, "Lalbagh, Lalbagh!"

That incident, or the fact that the garden had a profusion of red roses and other red flowers, must have inspired Hyder Ali to call it 'Lalbagh'. Tipu Sultan, when he ascended the throne, improved the



garden further by obtaining plants and seeds from Mauritius. Lalbagh grew to be a treasure-house of rare and valuable, tropical and sub-tropical plants, including indigenous and foreign fruit trees. Interestingly, two mango trees, supposed to have been planted by Tipu Sultan, stand firm and green at Lalbagh, providing shade to thousands of visitors who come to see it each day!

During Tipu Sultan's time Lalbagh was a pleasure park as well as an experimental farm that supplied seeds and plants to farmers. After Tipu Sultan's death in 1799, Lalbagh came into the possession of the East India Company. Major Waugh, a botanist,

was responsible for introducing plants like cypress and thuja, tempting many Britishers to call the garden Cypress Garden. Lalbagh was then taken over as a branch of the Bengal Presidency Botanic Garden. Several European botanists played crucial roles in the improvement of the gardens. Most of these men had their initial training at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, England.

### Pioneers

The 'golden era' of plant introduction began with the appointment of John Cameron as Director in 1874. Trained in horticulture at the Kew Gardens, he introduced a wide range of useful and botanically interesting plants in a systematic way. He introduced and popularized English vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower, carrot, knol-khol (kholrabi) and brought in 17 varieties of apple trees, the most popular being 'Rome beauty'. The notable plant species introduced during his tenure at Lalbagh are: 'pagoda flower' (*brownea rosea*) from West Indies, 'East African cedar' (*juniperus procera*) from Kew, oil-palm from Gold Coast, 'Indian privet' (*clerodendrons*), 'Arabian tea' (*catha edulis*) from Aden, and so on.

Considered the 'father of horticulture' in Karnataka, Cameron went all out to see that the vegetables he had imported were adopted by the local farmers. In 1890, he had got three fruits of marrow from Ceylon, now

Sri Lanka, which he grew at Lalbagh. Impressed by the yield, he used to go on horseback, it seems, wearing a large coat, to the outskirts of the city. Here he would give the fruits of marrow, locally called 'cho-chow', or Bangalore brinjal to the farmers, milk-sellers and vegetable hawkers sitting there, urging them to plant the fruits and reap bountiful harvests! The tall, beautiful, wrought-iron gates of Lalbagh are named after this visionary.

Cameron's German successor, G.H. Krumbiegal, too, introduced a creditable number of exotic flora. Krumbiegal, who had a keen insight in regard to the methodological development of horticulture, is specially remembered for his contribution in laying almost all the important government parks and gardens including the world-famous, Brindavan Gardens, along the Krishnaraja Sagar Dam in Mysore. He also initiated the opening of the Horticultural Training School, and the Bureau of Economic Plants. From his time, over 100 years ago, flower shows became a regular feature of Lalbagh. Driving down Krumbiegal Road, one can feel the coolness in the air owing to the shade of the trees introduced by Krumbiegal at Lalbagh.

In 1932, Lalbagh got its first Indian Director, H.C. Javaraya. The lantern-shaped guard tower at one of the gates of the garden was recreated by him. The person responsible for elevating the minor department of horticulture to a major one was Dr. M.H. Mari Gowda. He started an English

journal called *The Lalbagh*. A full-fledged plant-protection laboratory, soil-testing laboratory, and seed-testing laboratory came up because of his dynamism. The library and a road along a wall of Lalbagh are named after this great pioneer.

### The Glass House

After poring over books in the cool interiors of the library, Juhi decided to step out once again into the library of living plants. Walking about this 240-acre garden, reading all the information given on each tree, was a good exercise for both body and mind.

Walking through the Statue Park, so named because it had a black, metallic statue of His Highness Chamaraja Wodeyar, Juhi saw several children looking interestedly at a huge Floral Clock surrounded by colourful statues of Snow White and the seven dwarfs and some forest animals. The floral clock consists of a lawn maintained on a slope. The numbers are created by growing grass of different colours at appropriate points. Huge hands move across the lawn indicating the correct time. The mechanism of the clock is hidden under the raised lawn! After enjoying a view of a ball fountain near the shade garden, Juhi came to a wooden structure called the Band Stand. It seems the military band used to play there on weekends.

From the Band Stand, Juhi looked up across beautifully-laid terrace gardens, at the Glass House. This beautiful structure in glass and steel was constructed in 1890. Proposed by John Cameron, and modelled on the famous Crystal Palace of England, the Glass House was primarily meant as a conservatory to acclimatize exotic plant specimens. Later used as a venue for state functions, banquets, science exhibitions and cultural events, the Glass House is now used only for conducting flower shows twice a year. At the time of its construction the Glass House was dedicated to Prince Albert Victor of Wales.

Breathing in the clean, scented air of Lalbagh, Juhi wondered just how many different kinds of plants grew there. "Almost 1,854 species, 673 genera, and 890 cultivars," answered the helpful person who had volunteered to show her around the botanical garden. "It is not only a tourist spot, Lalbagh is the centre of Karnataka's entire gamut of horticultural activity," he said.

Horticulture is supposed to be one of the oldest arts. But it is one of the newest sciences. A botanical garden is an institution for scientific investigations with regard to plants. Lalbagh has full-fledged laboratories, a dehydration unit, and several types of nurseries. Scientists working here aim at improving the varieties of several plants which, over the years, have proved to be of much importance in food production.

Specialists work at Lalbagh to come up with disease-resistant vegetables, fruits, flowering and non-flowering ornamental plants, and seeds. For example, a pomologist involves himself in fruit culture, an entomologist studies insects and educates farmers on how to prevent them from damaging their crops, a mycologist studies fungi, their uses and the damage they may cause to plants.

### Spreading knowledge

Lalbagh also propagates knowledge of scientific cultivation of plants, methods of fertilizing, pruning, treatment of pests and diseases, through short courses for the public and through flower shows and exhibitions. In recent years, Lalbagh has given incentives for the development of school gardens by providing plant material and technical assistance. Lecture and film shows on horticultural topics are arranged frequently in the garden. It also conducts courses in ikebana, bonsai and fruit preservation.

Lalbagh has introduced a remarkable number of horticultural and economic plants yielding industrial products like fibres, resins, gums, dyes, scents and oils. Since Lalbagh also doubles as the administrative seat of the State's Department of Horticulture, a good deal of botanical work gets done here. A steady stream of farmers come from in and around the State, asking for high-quality plants, saplings, seeds



and know-hows. Many ornamental flowering plants propagated at Lalbagh have spread far, beautifying schools, hospitals, hotels, roads, all over the State.

Juhi returned the next day to enjoy the various kinds of gardens laid out inside Lalbagh. This treasure-house of plants has an arboretum—a section of woody trees, an Economic Garden comprising trees of economic importance, a Herb Garden consisting of medicinal plants, Plantum, a Fruit Garden, a Magnolia Lawn, a Hibiscus Lawn, a Ficus Lawn, and so on. A Topiary Garden shows plants pruned to form animal shapes.

A trip through Lalbagh made Juhi feel quite elated. She had walked where many greats had walked. When Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize in 1919, he was felicitated by the people of Bangalore under one of the five huge Java fig trees or ‘weeping fig’ (*ficus benjamina*) growing in Lalbagh. Incidentally, there is a legend which says the Pandavas planted the fig trees!

Later visitors like Nikita Krushchev, Marshal Tito, the Kings of Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia, the Premier of China, and the Dalai Lama, planted saplings at Lalbagh which have grown majestically. Pandit Nehru, who always made time to stroll through Lalbagh whenever he was in Bangalore, planted a sapling of ‘pride of Venezuela’ (*tabebuia argentea*) in front of the Glass House, which flowers profusely now. When India’s foremost builder of bridges and dams, Dr. M. Visvesvaraya, was nearly 102 years old, he was felicitated at Lalbagh.

## Economic value

Begun as a mere pleasure garden for a ruler, Lalbagh has become a celebrated horticultural institution today. It was here that dryland management practices were made known. The cultivation of crops such as mango, ‘ber’, jackfruit, cashew, tamarind, ‘sapota’, guava, litchi, avocado, pomegranate, and many others were popularized, which put Karnataka in the lead in the field of dryland horticulture. Though Lalbagh has a lake, it used to face severe water shortage during the late winter and summer months. This prompted horticulturists at Lalbagh to take up the task of making farming on arid lands viable. Dryland farming not only provides additional nutritious crops to the farmer, but also helps him to tide over acute and recurring drought conditions. The demand for planting material to start dryland farms became so much that Lalbagh had to start special schemes. Ground nurseries, rapid multiplications, mist chambers and poly houses had to be developed.

Apart from being a highly educational institution for a student of botany, Lalbagh is where one can see a huge ‘upside down’ tree! No, those are not roots stretching out to the sky, they are just branches of a rare tree with bulging trunks called the giant baobab or ‘monkey bread tree’ (*adansonia digitata*). Juhi loved to roll the botanical names with her tongue! She observed the leaves of ‘Krishna’s butter cup’ (*ficus Krishnae*). The leaves had pouches on the underside

in which child Krishna is supposed to have carried stolen butter!

The 'dita bark' (*alstonia scholaris*), with its buttressed base and ghostly appearance, had a lot of bee-hives. Just a leap away, was the 'noble amherstia' (*amherstia nobilis*), its hanging bunches of flowers looking like humming birds.

Lalbagh is home too for such plants as the 'Shiva Linga' or 'Vishnu' tree—a curious example of indigenous concepts grafted on a foreign tree—'putrajeeva' tree, 'dividivi' fever nut tree, cabbage tree, tree tomato, elephant apple, monkey puzzle tree, sausage tree, mummy apple, tree of sorrow, 'rudrakshi' tree and 'umbrella' palms. How each plant looks is left to the reader's imagination!

The 'umbrella' palm tree is also called the century palm because it flowers just once during its lifetime which may be after 100 years. The 'talipot palm' (*corypha umbraculifera*) plant flowered after 37 years. The glorious 20-ft inflorescence was the cynosure of all eyes for six months. After shedding a tonne of nuts around, the great palm started dying, as all century palms do after they have flowered! Juhi felt really sad to hear this.

Juhi's journey of knowledge through the Lalbagh Botanical Garden was made more memorable because of the fragrance of the plants there. Wafts of ilang-ilang merged subtly with those of 'manoranjana'. The Mexican Linloe spread its fragrance, as did the night queen, jasmines, China box, nutmeg, oleander, eucalyptus, lavender, camphor and roses.

In the 'necklace' of Bangalore's parks, Lalbagh has been called the sparkling 'pendant'. Apart from making the benefits in the botanical research activities here available to the farmers, the Lalbagh Botanical Garden is a unique landmark of horticulture in the country. The horticultural advances made at Lalbagh have helped bring about a process of social change among people. By elevating the status of the farmer, Lalbagh has been instrumental in making more people develop orchards, vineyards, gardens and estates.

In a rapidly developing industrial city like Bangalore, the beautiful Lalbagh is a vital lung space. To preserve the park and to arrest environmental degradation, activities such as shooting for feature films has been banned in Lalbagh since 1976. Boating on the lake too was stopped because it would hinder the passage of migratory birds.

Over the main gates of the Lalbagh Botanical Garden, is a permanent meaningful welcome banner. Superscribed on it is a hymn presented by the famous poet, K.V. Puttappa, which says, "This garden is the abode of God..."

Certainly, felt Juhi, Lalbagh was a garden where the gods of knowledge, peace, harmony and beauty lived!

# Arya Vaidya Sala

By  
Gayatri Devi

**K**OTTAKKAL is a relatively small village in the Malappuram district of Kerala. It is internationally famous because of the Arya Vaidya Sala.

Set up in the year 1902, the Arya Vaidya Sala is an institution of Ayurveda. One should know about Ayurveda to realize its importance.

*Ayurveda* is a word in Sanskrit, which means knowledge of life. *Ayuh* means life; *Veda* means knowledge.

Ayurveda is an ancient system of medicine which has been followed in India for countless centuries. It is not a system of medicine to treat only diseases. It is a system that teaches man how to lead a healthy life, free from diseases. This system also has medicines to treat patients suffering from specific diseases. Ayurvedic medicines are made out of herbs and minerals which are not harmful to human beings. They normally do not have any side-effects.

During the British rule, Indian methods of medicine were generally neglected by the

Government. There was the effort to introduce foreign systems into India. In the process, the Ayurvedic system, followed by Indians from ancient times, suffered.

### A visionary

Visionaries are persons who are able to think ahead of their times and come out with ideas that are beneficial to mankind. It is such ideas that lead to the establishment of institutes which can cater to the needs of human beings.

P.S. Varier (1869-1944), an Ayurvedic physician, observed that there was no encouragement from the British Government to continue with Ayurvedic practices. He started thinking about evolving strategies in order to improve the situation.

Nowadays, Ayurvedic medicines are available in a ready-made form for immediate use. It was not the case when Varier started practising. The physicians used to give some medicines. Other medicines had to be prepared by the patients themselves following the instructions given by the physicians. Difficulties arose in the process. Varier realized that this was the main reason why patients had started moving away from Ayurveda to other forms where ready-made medicines were usually available.

The other reason was that some medicines proved ineffective. The basic ingredients that were used in

P.S. Varier



the preparation of Ayurvedic medicines had to be purified before being processed into the final drug form. Ayurvedic physicians had to depend on illiterate and indifferent employees for collection of herbs and making them into medicines. When these medicines were not properly prepared, the patients did not respond to them. They slowly started losing faith in the Ayurvedic system.

Varier felt that the physicians should not only be conversant with herbs, minerals and the processes to purify them, but they should be aware of the procedures to prepare medicines. Yet he realized that it might not be possible for all physicians to learn

every procedure and process. Therefore, he felt that there should be an institute which would take care of the preparation and storage of medicines. Since the physicians would be required to use these medicines, they could buy them from the institute. This would also considerably reduce the difficulties of patients who were otherwise forced to prepare the medicines themselves, and of physicians who were dependent on uneducated workers.

### The institute

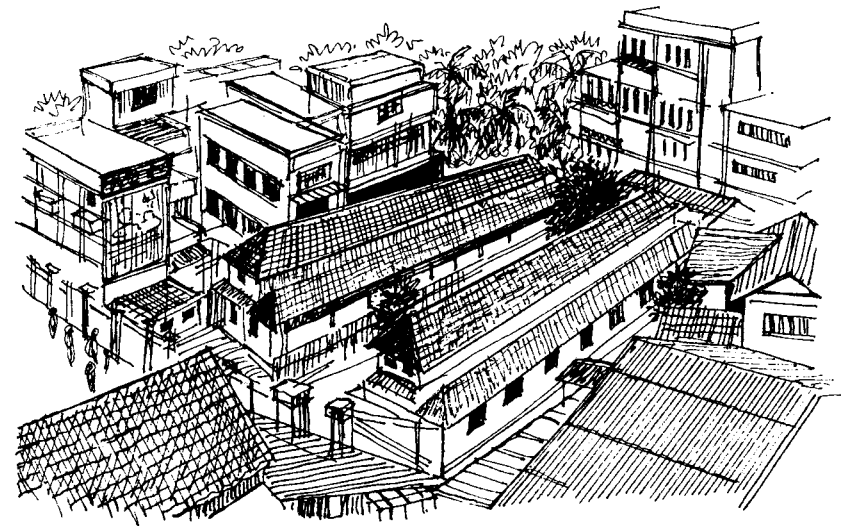
To start such an institute, Varier purchased a plot of land in Kottakkal for Rs. 125. Many persons discouraged him. Still Varier, a man of strong will, went ahead with the setting up of the institute with great determination. The Arya Vaidya Sala was set up on October 12, on *Vijayadashami* day.

Stocking and selling Ayurvedic medicines was a novel experiment in South India. Only a few people believed in the efficacy of these medicines. Many argued that the experiment would be a failure and that it would end very soon. However, Varier continued with his efforts. Slowly people started getting the benefits of the Ayurvedic medicines. Thus several people started regaining confidence in Ayurveda. Varier can rightly be called the saviour of Ayurveda in South India. It is due to his meritorious and successful efforts that the traditional

system of Ayurvedic medicine became popular once again. It was he who started the preparation and supply of medicines along modern lines thereby giving this science its rightful place among medical systems. The example set by him was emulated by others later.

Before long the name of P.S. Varier, his Arya Vaidya Sala and its medicines became popular even outside Kerala. As the demand for his medicines increased, his institute started preparing medicines in large quantities. Later, he opened two branches—one in Kozhikode, in 1916, and the other in Palakkad, in 1932.

The Arya Vaidya Sala is not just a place where



Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala

medicines are prepared and sold. It has a very big Nursing Home where patients can undergo treatment. There is a Charitable Hospital for the benefit of the poor. There is a Pharmacy and also an Ayurvedic College from where quite a number of students pass out every year to serve patients in the Ayurvedic system of medicine. Besides, there is a Herb Garden, a Research Unit and a Publication Wing.

### ‘Treatments’

When the Arya Vaidya Sala was initially set up, it was a dispensary, treating out-patients. Now it has a Nursing Home with a Golden Jubilee Block, a Silver Jubilee Block and an Adi Sankara Block for accommodating patients coming from various parts of India and from countries such as Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Burma, Iran, Iraq, Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the United Arab Emirates. The Nursing Home is big and the atmosphere inside it is quite homely.

Special treatments called ‘Panchakarmas’, meaning five types of treatments, are practised in the Nursing Home for treating patients with diseases like paralysis, *sciatica hysteria* and insanity. The Nursing Home has facilities too for the attendants of patients. They can even cook their food there if they so desire. There is generally a long list of patients waiting for admission.

Varier wanted to extend a free service to poor people and accordingly started the Arya Vaidya Chikitsa Sala for those patients who could not afford to pay. They are given food, treatment and medicines free. Many types of diseases are treated here. There are 100 beds in the Charitable Hospital.

Although medicated oils, ghee and other ingredients used for the ‘Panchakarma’ treatment are expensive, they are given free of cost to poor patients. All the treatments available in the Nursing Home are also available in the Charitable Hospital. Funds necessary to run the Charitable Hospital are drawn from the profits of the Nursing Home and the Pharmacy of the Arya Vaidya Sala.

### Technology

The Arya Vaidya Sala began with a Pharmacy. At present there are two factories to manufacture medicines—one at Kottakkal and the other at Kanjikode. Modern equipment is being used in these factories.

The method of preparation of medicines which has been proved to be effective over several centuries is followed strictly. Although medicines are being prepared with modern equipment, the procedures laid down in Ayurveda are not deviated from. Thus there is an excellent blend of modern technology available in the form of machines and traditional technology

in the form of medicines prescribed by the ancient rishis of India.

The medicines of the Pharmacy are popular in several parts of our country and also abroad. They are found to be very effective. Medicines are made available through a network of branches and agencies. The available branches at present are located in Kozhikode, Tirur, Palakkad, Ernakulam, Thiruvananthapuram, Erode, Alwaye, Chennai, Kannur, Coimbatore and New Delhi. There are more than 350 agencies all over India and abroad in countries such as Malaysia and Singapore.

The branches are managed by efficient and qualified physicians. These branches are not merely outlets for medicines. The patients can get free consultation from the physicians.

## Education

One of the important aims of setting up the Arya Vaidya Sala is to propagate the Ayurvedic system of medicine. The survival of any system of medicine depends on the doctors practising it. If there are no qualified practitioners, the system, however valid, will not win the confidence of the patients.

There were, once, no specific specialized institutes where one could learn Ayurveda. In the absence of such institutes, it was difficult for the practitioners to obtain the necessary expertise. It is against this

background that Varier felt a strong need for a college where Ayurveda could be taught to interested students in a systematic manner. Accordingly, the Ayurveda College was set up.

The college was originally founded in Kozhikode in 1917. It did not have the benefit of an attached hospital for students to have a first-hand experience regarding diseases and methods of treatment. Therefore, the college was shifted to Kottakkal after the Charitable Hospital was started in 1924.

The college, affiliated to the Calicut University, offers a Bachelor's Degree in Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (B.A.M.S.). The duration of the course is five and a half-years, which includes six months' internship in the hospital. Several students of the college have contributed substantially to the studies in Ayurveda. They have also set up dispensaries in various parts of the country to cater to the needs of patients.

## Herb Garden

Medicines in Ayurveda are chiefly made from herbs. Various kinds of herbs have been discussed in the ancient Ayurvedic textbooks like *Charaka Samhita* and *Susruta Samhita*. One of the main problems in the preparation of Ayurvedic medicines is the identification of herbs. Usage of wrong herbs may not only lead to ineffective medicines but may be harmful to patients.

Forests are slowly being destroyed everywhere with sad consequences. With the destruction of forests, availability of herbs is becoming difficult.

To overcome these problems, a herb garden is maintained in an eight-acre plot in Kottakkal, and also at Kanhirapuzha and Kottapuram in Palakkad district. Various herbs are grown in the garden under the supervision of a research officer. The herb garden is useful to students of the college to identify various herbs. They can also see specimens of rare and difficult-to-identify herbs in the garden.

## Research

For any science to flourish, consistent research is necessary. This is possible only when there are adequate facilities. The Arya Vaidya Sala has taken the lead in providing these in the Research Ward, with 20 beds, in the hospital. Clinical research work is taken up in this ward. Patients with certain kinds of diseases relating to the digestive system are admitted here and studies are made about the Ayurvedic treatment given to them.

The Research Ward is under the supervision of the Central Council for Research in Ayurveda. The expenses to maintain the ward are being met by the Arya Vaidya Sala.

The Research and Development Wing studies the quality of ingredients, which are used to prepare

medicines. They study methods to devise control measures for ensuring the purity and quality of the final products.

The Publication Wing of the Arya Vaidya Sala undertakes the publication of a journal and select books in order to teach the general concepts of Ayurveda and the results of special research work done in Ayurveda to the common people, students and practitioners of Ayurveda and other systems of medicine.

The quarterly journal of the Arya Vaidya Sala is titled *Arya Vaidyan* and is published both in Malayalam and English. The magazine highlights the achievements of Ayurveda and its relevance in the present social conditions. It carries articles that explain how the traditional methods of Ayurveda are relevant to modern scientific concepts. The journal is very informative for the common people and to practitioners of various systems of medicine.

The Arya Vaidya Sala conducts an all-India seminar every year as part of its Founder's Day Celebrations on January 30. Distinguished Ayurvedic physicians are invited from all over the country to participate in the seminar. Papers on various topics relating to Ayurveda are presented during the seminar. Ideas proposed by ancient Ayurvedic scholars are discussed in the light of modern scientific knowledge. These discussions help in analyzing the methods of treatment available in Ayurveda and improving them wherever necessary.



The Arya Vaidya Sala publishes all the papers and discussions for documentation as permanent record so that they can be used for reference.

A competition is held every year as part of the Founder's Day Celebrations. Articles on a specific Ayurvedic theme are invited and prizes are awarded for the two best articles. These competitions encourage students and practitioners of Ayurveda to study a topic in depth and write on it. The theme is changed every year. The prize-winning articles are published by the Arya Vaidya Sala.

As finances are very important for running the institute, Varier had made a will that allocated profits arising out of the Arya Vaidya Sala for its maintenance and improvement. Thus it is a self-funding institute.

Forty-five per cent of the profit is utilized for the maintenance and improvement of facilities in the Nursing Home and the Research Wing of the Arya Vaidya Sala. The amount is used to provide better facilities for the treatment of in-patients, preparation of medicines, research in drug preparation and conducting the annual seminar on Ayurveda. Another forty-five per cent of the profit is utilized for providing medicines, food and clothing free of cost to poor patients in the Charitable Hospital. The remaining ten per cent is provided as financial assistance for the running of the college.

Today, the Arya Vaidya Sala is synonymous with Ayurveda. It has shown the efficacy of

Ayurvedic treatments to people all over the world.

Patients suffering from various diseases and belonging to different economic classes come to the Arya Vaidya Sala to get good treatment. That is the reason why the institute has been able to continue its services and grow for almost a century.

Varier, who was born and brought up in a small village, had very little schooling and had no knowledge of the present methods of commerce or industry. Yet he could conceive an institute that grew from humble beginnings into a great institute. It continues to serve mankind as intended by its founder. In recognition of his work, Varier was awarded the title 'Vaidya Ratnam' by Lord Willingdon, the Viceroy, in January, 1933.

Kottakal, where the Arya Vaidya Sala is located, is well connected by air, rail and road. The nearest airport is Kozhikode (25 kilometre), the nearest railway station is Tirur (16 kilometre) and bus facilities are available from Malappuram (13 kilometre).

It is easy to reach Kottakkal. A tourist to Kerala can make the Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakkal, one of the places to visit. One can see a great institute of Ayurveda, the dream of a great man turned into reality by the man himself!

# The National Library

By  
Aradhna Jha

THE National Library, Calcutta, is an institute of national significance, and occupies a very important position amongst the Indian libraries. It functions as a book museum, where a vast collection of Indian and foreign literature is available to the public.

## History

The story of the National Library goes back to March 21, 1836, with the establishment of the Calcutta Public Library, which was opened to the public at 30, Esplanade Row.

The Calcutta Public Library was started without any assistance from the government and was run privately. It owed its origin to J.H. Stocqueler, editor of the *Englishman*, who first expressed the idea of establishing a public library in Calcutta. His memoirs reveal his determination to introduce an establishment in Calcutta, similar to the General

Library in Bombay, as the city 'was equally destitute of a Public Library'.

His project was submitted to a public meeting in August 1835 and was accepted. The library received subscriptions from several eminent personalities of the time.

The Calcutta Public Library received about 6,500 books from donors. This included a valuable collection of 4,675 volumes transferred from the library of the College of Fort William by Lord Metcalfe.

A Civil Surgeon, Dr. F.P. Strong, gave the ground floor of his residence at 30, Esplanade Row, for the use of the library. J.H. Stocqueler was appointed Honorary Secretary to the library and Stacy was the first Librarian.

The library remained at Esplanade Row till July 1841, when it was shifted to Fort William. In June 1844, it was again moved to the first floor of Metcalfe Hall on Strand Road.

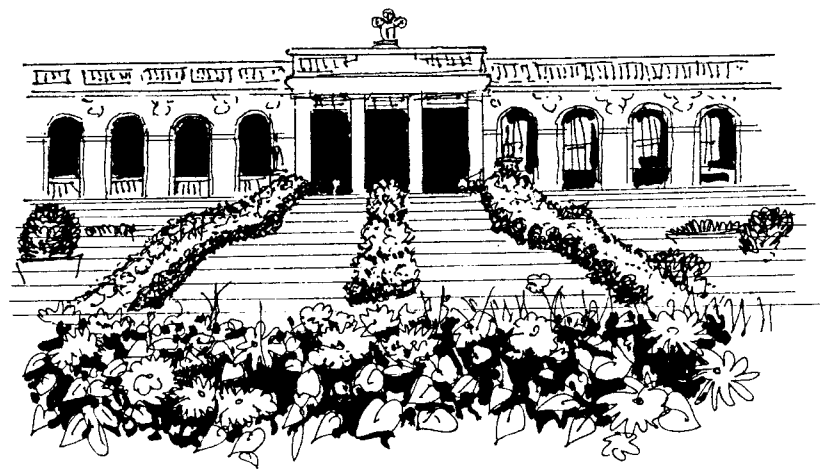
The Calcutta Public Library was the first of its kind in the East. It was served by many eminent Indians and Europeans, both as proprietors and as subscribers, during its long and eventful existence. The Indian patrons included Dwarkanath Tagore, Debendranath Tagore, Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Ram Gopal Ghose, Rustomjee Cowasjee, Raja Satya Charan Ghosal, Peary Chand Mitra and Sambhunath Pandit. Dwarkanath Tagore became the first proprietor of the library. In recognition of his

patronage, his marble bust was installed at the library. It can still be seen at the entrance of the National Library.

Among the Europeans who patronized the National Library, the ones who deserve special mention are: T.B. Macaulay, J.C. Marshman, Lord Metcalfe, James Princep, W.P. Grant, J.E.D. Bethune and H. Beveridge.

The contributions of W.P. Grant have an important place in the history of the library. He was one of the founders and served as Curator from October 31, 1835 to August 23, 1848. He was deeply involved in the library's management and took a keen interest in its activities. He donated several books and money to the library over a period of time.

The Father of the Bengali novel, Peary Chand Mitra, made several significant contributions to the



The National Library

library. His four-decade-long association with this institution began in 1836 when he was made the sub-librarian. His appointment as Librarian in 1848 was a noteworthy event in the library's history as, till then, it was almost entirely managed by the Europeans. His efforts greatly helped in the construction of Metcalfe Hall. The printed 'Catalogue of the Calcutta Public Library' was issued in 1855 during his tenure. After his retirement in 1866, he was made an honorary member and secretary of the library. In 1874, he was elected to the library's council.

Besides the proprietors and subscribers, others were also allowed free use of the library for a specified period of time. For some years after the library opened, members could borrow reference books for use at home. However, this facility was later discontinued.

A committee was given the responsibility of selecting books for the library. In fact, it is due to these efforts that the library has a rich collection of rare books and journals. These are used by scholars from all over India and abroad.

The success of the Calcutta Public Library was due to the joint patronage of the Europeans and Indians in Calcutta. No other institution of this period succeeded to get this kind of support.

With the Revolt of 1857, however, the earlier amity and cooperation between the Indians and Europeans was greatly reduced. Support from the

latter gradually declined as the national movement grew more pronounced. Also, in the 1850s many libraries were established in various parts of Calcutta. So the importance the Calcutta Public Library enjoyed in the 1830s and 1840s, of being the only public library worth the name, gradually diminished. Owing to financial problems its condition worsened during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

### Imperial Library

The next phase in the National Library's history began when Lord Curzon first introduced the idea of establishing a good public library by combining the Calcutta Public Library's rich collections with those of the official Imperial Library. The latter had been formed in 1891 by joining a number of Secretariat libraries. The use of the old Imperial Library was limited to the senior government officers. Non-officials could borrow books after taking permission from the head of any department in the Government of India.

In 1902, the Imperial Library Act was passed and the new Imperial Library came into existence. It was formally opened to the public by Lord Curzon on January 30, 1903, at Metcalfe Hall.

The Imperial Library Act of 1902 stated the main objective of this new library: "It should be a library

Lord Curzon



of reference, a working place for students and a repository of material for the future historians of India, in which, so far as possible, every work written about India at any time can be seen or read.”

This Act, for the first time in Asia, defined the scope of a national library. The Government of India was made entirely responsible for the maintenance of the library. In fact, the opening of the new Imperial Library was a landmark in the history of the library movement in India. For the first time, the Government had realized its

duty of providing free library services to the public.

The Imperial Library started with a stock of about 100,000 volumes and was modelled on the British Museum Library. It had a vast collection of books on Indian history, art, literature and other subjects. The library authorities were keen to collect books written in various Indian languages.

The first Librarian of this library was John Macfarlane, the Assistant Librarian of the British Museum Library, who worked here till 1906. After him, the library was served, between the years 1907 and 1947, by three eminent personalities—Harinath De, J.A. Chapman and Khan Bahadur K.M. Asadullah. Harinath De was the first Bengali Librarian. During his tenure, the subject index to the ‘Library Author Catalogue—Volume 1’ was published. K.M. Asadullah started a summer course in library training in July 1935. Many accomplished library workers were trained here and occupied important positions of authority and honour.

After Independence, the Imperial Library (change of name) Act, 1948, was passed. With the Act, the library’s name became the National Library. In the same year, it was also shifted to Belvedere Estate in Alipore.

Among others, C. Rajagopalachari, the then Governor-General of India, was responsible for bringing about these crucial changes. He initiated the move to shift the library to Belvedere, the Viceregal Mansion at Alipore. Jawaharlal Nehru



too recommended it and gave the responsibility of building this national institution to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, then Union Education Minister. It took four years to remodel the magnificent mansion at Belvedere in accordance with the requirements of a modern library. The new home of the National Library was formally opened to the public on February 1, 1953, by the Maulana.

Following the change in name of the library, B.S. Kesavan was appointed Librarian (1948-63; 1970-71), followed by Y.M. Mulay (1963-67), D.R. Kalia (1967-71) and others.

## Belvedere House

Belvedere House is in the middle of a beautiful park spread over 30 acres of land. It is surrounded by lush lawns, trees, and gardens decorated with stone statues. The facade of the building is in the Italian Renaissance style. A wide flight of steps leads up to the main entrance of the library. The view of the surrounding areas from the top-most step is truly breathtaking. The sprawling gardens and the wide expanse of the blue sky add to the grandeur of this majestic building.

Belvedere has an interesting history. According to legend, the Nawab Nazim of Murshidabad, Mir Jafar Ali, gave his name to Alipore, where Belvedere is located. Most likely, at the place where the present building stands, there was earlier the residence of Prince Azim-us-Sham.

Belvedere was also the favourite residence of Lord Warren Hastings. He is believed to have hunted wild animals in the surrounding jungles in those days.

In 1854, the East India Company became the owner of Belvedere House. The Lieutenant-Governors resided there. When India's capital was shifted to Delhi, Belvedere became the winter residence of the Viceroys.

Belvedere House underwent several renovations under successive Lieutenant-Governors, starting from William Grey. An additional verandah with steps was constructed; the ballrooms acquired wooden floors; and spectacular electric lighting was installed in the

banquet hall, which is nearly 114 feet long. Several changes were again made when the library was shifted here.

Besides the main building, the National Library now includes an annexe, built some distance away from the old structure. There is also a new annexe building constructed nearby. The library still maintains a newspaper reading room at Esplanade East, its former home.

The library's administration is the responsibility of the Department of Culture, Government of India, which is under the Ministry of Human Resources Development.

The post of the Librarian is no longer as important as it was earlier. This is due to the creation of the post of Director in 1977 when R.K. Dasgupta was appointed the first Director of the National Library.

The Director represents the library at national and international seminars and conferences. He exercises all the administrative and financial powers which are delegated to the heads of departments of the Central Government.

The Director is in overall charge of the library with two professional librarians (redesignated as Principal Library and Information Officers) under him. He is also assisted by five Deputy Librarians (redesignated as Library and Information Officers) on the professional side and three Administrative Officers. There are 42 Assistant Library and Information Officers.

The administrative divisions basically support the professional set-up of the library. They are mainly concerned with the administrative aspects of the library personnel, maintenance of buildings, security, garden.

## Functions

The National Library has been operating on the following lines since July 14, 1969, when the Reviewing Committee submitted a report on the basic features of this library.

- It has to acquire, collect and conserve all the written and printed material produced in India and concerning India, written by both Indians and foreigners, wherever published and in whatever language. In fact, the library is a permanent repository or storehouse of all such material. It has to acquire a photographic record of such material as is not available in the country.
- It has to acquire and conserve manuscripts of national importance.
- It has to cooperate with and coordinate all efforts to obtain foreign literature required by the country.
- It has to render bibliographical and documentation services of retrospective material, both general and specialized.
- It has to act as a referral centre, supplying accurate knowledge of all sources of bibliographical activities.

- It has to provide photocopying and reprographic services.
- It has to act as a centre for international book exchange and international loan.

The National Library is the recipient of all materials published in India, under the Delivery of Books Act, 1954, which was amended in 1956. In addition to this, it also acquires materials mainly in the following categories:

1. Books and journals on India in any language, published anywhere in the world.
2. Indian publications published before 1954 and not available in the library.
3. Books by Indian authors published abroad.
4. Biographies of eminent personalities of the world.
5. All books by Nobel Prize winners.
6. All standard reference works.
7. All standard books on African and Asian countries.
8. Standard books in the languages of India's neighbouring countries.
9. Standard works in modern European languages like German, French, so on.
10. Selected latest books on all branches of knowledge including science and technology.
11. Back volumes of important research journals.
12. Micro-film and photostat copies of rare and out-of-print books, where necessary.
13. Filling of gaps in the library collection.

#### 14. Replacement of brittle and mutilated volumes.

The National Library often supplies information to the National Book Trust of India about the available translations of foreign classics into Indian languages and Indian classics into foreign languages. It also provides practical training to nominees of government departments and other approved institutions at the library.

Various exhibitions of books and manuscripts and printing techniques have been held and useful catalogues published on these occasions.

Different types of workshops and training programmes have been organized for the library's professional staff members, such as, those on the conservation of library materials. These members have participated in many conferences and seminars.

The library offers services to scholars from all over the world. It has a vast collection of more than two million books. Besides a rich collection in all Indian languages, it also has a great number of books in English and other European languages, as well as in Chinese, Japanese, Persian, Arabic. It has several rare books, journals and manuscripts in Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Tamil, and other languages.

The National Library has a membership of 12,000 in the reading rooms and 35,000 in the lending section. The membership of the library is free for any Indian citizen over 18 years of age. The library is open 362 days a year, the holidays being the Republic Day, Independence Day and Gandhi Jayanti. It is open



from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and on Saturday, Sunday and on declared holidays from 9.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. The total number of readers' seats in the library is about 500, and over a thousand readers use the library everyday. They include general readers, students, research workers, professionals and scholars.

## Facilities

The Main Reading Room is in the spacious banquet hall of the Viceregal Mansion. Beautiful pillared balconies stand above the majestic banquet table which is 110 feet long. This table seats more than one hundred readers and is placed in the centre. It is flanked by small tables with four seats each, on either side. Special accommodation has been provided for research scholars in fourteen specially designed alcoves on the two wings of the hall. Each alcove has a table with four seats. There are research carrels on the balconies above, with 26 seats.

The Main Reading Room can accommodate around 320 users at a time. It has an open-shelf collection of 10,000 volumes of general reference books, books for basic study and reference books on specific subjects. The catalogues of the books are in cards filed in wooden cabinets with drawers, kept in a room outside.

The floors of the reading rooms are lined with rubber and linoleum to ensure silence. All the equipment is modern and comparable to that in any

similar library in the world. In the Main Reading Room, besides the old crystal bracket lights, there is adequate artificial lighting.

The Annexe Reading Room accommodates about 70 readers. As it has specialized collections like government documents, periodicals and unbound newspapers, this reading room is used mainly by scholars.

The Esplanade Reading Room which can accommodate 22 readers, provides reading and research facilities to members interested in back volumes of important newspapers.

The New Annexe Reading Room provides reading and research facilities to members mainly interested in Hindi, Telugu and Punjabi publications.

Apart from these reading rooms, there is also reading space in some other divisions at the Annexe Building—Asutosh Mukherjee Collection, Rare Books, Science and Technology, European, Afro-Asian and Urdu languages, as well as Foreign Official Documents Division in the New Annexe Building.

The National Library is the only one of its kind in the world which has a Lending Section. This section still exists owing to the tradition of the Calcutta Public Library. This section gives books to readers for home use and to government departments, recognized institutions, libraries in India and abroad. Other national libraries do not lend out books as their collection is supposed to be available at any time within their premises.

The National Library also has 84,952 maps kept in

specially designed steel map cabinets. These include some very rare and valuable maps. The Library's Periodical Section receives and records journals in more than 48 languages.

The library also includes a Children's Library which was opened on January 22, 1960. Readers aged between 6 and 14 years are admitted here.

The library's Stack Room is a very important and active area. It is very clean and neat and its records are in order.

## Bibliography

The National Library acts as the main bibliographic centre of India. It has two Bibliography Divisions established in 1951. The Bibliography (General) Division caters to the needs of individual scholars and institutions for select lists of books on various subjects. It also caters to international commitments for bibliographical information. The Bibliography (Special) Division compiles, edits and brings out a comprehensive *Bibliography of Indology*.

These two divisions also index important periodicals and organize exhibitions of books to mark important cultural, literary and other events. Suitable hand-outs, bibliographies and exhibition brochures are issued on such occasions.

The Reprography Division was established in 1969. Its activities include micro-filming, reprographic

services, and offset printing. It also offers photocopy facilities to readers, besides printing the library newsletters, annual reports, exhibition brochures and bibliographies.

This division also conserves printed material like old newspapers and other rare matter on micro-film.

The National Library works as the country's Exchange Centre. It has established exchange relations with 221 institutions in 86 countries. Through this book exchange agreement, several foreign publications have been received.

Books have also been received through generous donations made from the private collections of Asutosh Mukherjee (84,000 volumes—the largest personal collection housed in any national library of the world), Ram Das Sen, Barid Baran Mukherjee, Jadunath Sarkar, S.N. Sen, Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai, Zamindar of Buhar, Maharaja of Tripura and others.

The Preservation Division of the library looks after the binding and repairing work. Many other national libraries of the world depend on outside binders.

The Laboratory Division of the library takes care of the books and manuscripts by various conservation methods such as deacidification, control of fungus, preservation of old leather bindings and fumigation of books. It can be aptly described as a 'book hospital'.

In recent years the library has extended consultancy services in the fields of automation and conservation.

The National Library has accepted new responsibilities

and adapted itself according to the changing needs of society. Over the years it has tried to achieve its educational and cultural objectives at the national and international level. However, shortage of space has been a major problem. For this reason a massive building called Bhasha Bhavan, with modern facilities, is being constructed nearby. Steps are also being taken to computerize most of the service divisions of the library. There is still scope for improvement and development so that it remains one of the leading national libraries of the world.

Gandhiji's words at the entrance to the main building remain its guiding principle: "I do not want my house to be walled in all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."

# The Deccan College

By  
Brinda Gill

**H**ASSERS-BY on the Pune-Kirkee road to the north of the gentle Mulla-Mutha river are often struck by the impressive buildings of the Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute, standing in seeming isolation. This venerable institution, closely associated with the study of India's history and culture, had a modest birth during the ebb of the Peshwas and the rise of the British in the area.

## History

In 1818, the Peshwa rulers of Pune forfeited their kingdom, after the battle of Kirkee, to the East India Company. The British promised protection to all the religious and charitable trusts of the Peshwas. The Peshwas had a *dakshina* (fund), which received an annual contribution from the revenue of the Maratha state, for encouraging higher studies in Sanskrit. The British continued this tradition. With the support of Mountstuart Elphinstone, the

Governor of Bombay, the Poona Sanskrit College was started in 1821. In a year, 143 Brahmin students were enrolled for the study of Sanskrit.

The college did not have fixed premises. In its early days, it was housed in Vishrambagh, the former palace of the Peshwas. On June 7, 1851, the Poona Sanskrit College was combined with the English School to form the Poona College. English and history came to be taught to a cross-section of students.

The University of Bombay was established on July 18, 1857, and the Poona College was affiliated to it in 1860. It functioned as a centre for undergraduate and postgraduate studies for imparting Western education.

In 1863, Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, a Parsi merchant and philanthropist, donated Rs. 1,25,000 to the government towards a fixed campus for the college on the condition that it donates an equal amount and grants an appropriate site for it. Thus on October 15, 1864, the foundation-stone was laid at the present site, and the construction was completed by 1868. The building was designed by Captain H. C. Wilkins. An informal road led to the portico of the imposing U-shaped building, constructed in Gothic style with grey stones touched with white, employing pointed arches, strong, vertical lines, slender pillars and red-tiled sloping roofs. A garden was laid out later. Today the college retains an old world charm and character. On shifting to these premises, the

college was named the Deccan College to imply that it encompassed a geographical area.

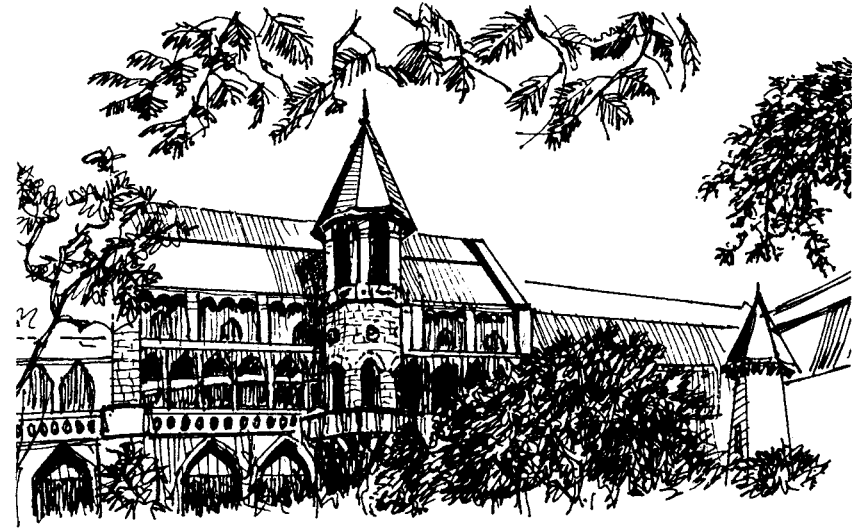
In 1892, the college journal, *The Deccan College Quarterly*, wholly managed by the students, was born. The journal published reports on the work of the college as well as articles of general interest. This venture provided the students with an opportunity to mould and express their thoughts, giving them a sense of responsibility.

The college functioned well till the year 1932 when the number of admissions fell drastically. Two colleges set up on the far side of the city drew the students who found the distance and travel time to the Deccan College inconvenient. Thus, owing to inadequate finances, the college was closed down in 1934.

### A new start

The Deccan College Past Students Association rallied bravely to have the college reopened. On August 17, 1939, the Deccan College was reopened as a Postgraduate and Research Institute for promoting higher learning and research in Indology and social sciences. It provided a library, museum, laboratory and other facilities to scholars. The departmental staff conducted collaborative and coordinated research projects and the teaching staff provided training and guidance.

The Deccan College



During the second world war, the military occupied the campus and the institute was temporarily shifted to the Jeejeebhoy Castle.

In 1949, the Poona University was established and a year later, the Deccan College was affiliated to it. Since then it has been engaged in research in ancient Indian history, culture and archaeology, linguistics, Maratha history, anthropology and sociology. It is governed by a Board of Trustees and a Council of Management. In 1990 the institute was accorded the status of a deemed university by the Government of India and it started functioning in its new capacity from June 1994. The property of the institute is vested with the Board of Trustees.

The daily routine of the students in the old days followed the adage 'early to bed and early to rise'. From six to ten in the morning it was time for self- study, and at 10 o'clock, brunch was served. From 11.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. classes were held, followed by games. Dinner was at 7 p.m. and lights were switched off at 10 p.m. Studies apart, in those days, there were hardly any activities. Principal William Wordsworth Jr. (1870) remarked upon the inactivity of the students and hoped 'perhaps in time the students may take some of our English games to which they show little inclination'. Ten years later, there were facilities for boating, tennis and cricket in the campus. Two boats were brought from England for boating in the Mulla-Mutha river.

## Archaeology

The Department of Archaeology of the Deccan College is the foremost in the country and is renowned internationally. The Linguistics Department too is widely recognized.

To understand the major role the Department of Archaeology plays in recording our history, we need to know the importance of archaeology.

Archaeology is the study of antiquities. It is the archaeologist who obtains coins, statues, potteries, tombstones, for reconstructing the past. He looks for monuments and identifies them. He sometimes takes an aerial view for a total, clearer picture of the pattern of

complexes of ruined stone walls, buried structures. For him, excavating a site is the most important task. He conscientiously digs to recover buried treasures, accurately records his findings and publishes these facts. The archaeologist carries immense responsibility. When he digs a site, its orientation is altered and the information about the excavation survives in his records.

One of the basic concepts in archaeology is the principle of stratification. When an archaeologist digs a site, he finds articles in uneven strata or layers.

The higher strata hold articles from the comparatively recent past, whereas articles of an older period lie deeper. He distinguishes by colour, feel, texture and smell, one layer of accumulated deposits from another and records and interprets the facts. He comes upon human bones, teeth and skulls which explain the human structure. Sometimes animal bones are also found with human bones indicating the animals man domesticated, like the dog, cat, sheep and horse. By comparing the layers, the archaeologist can say that the dog was tamed before the horse as the dog's bones were found in a deeper layer. Thus the archaeologist finds many interesting objects which tell him a story which he then knits for us.

Pottery, stone tools and metal objects hold great importance for him. Pottery, a product of human activity, was developed over thousands of years. Pottery of different periods distinguishes different types of people. It helps archaeologists recover valuable clues to our history.

The Deccan College is the only centre in India to have the necessary laboratories required to analyze excavation results. Archaeological samples are sent here from different universities and research institutes—the Archaeological Survey of India, State departments of archaeology, and also foreign agencies.

The laboratories are the Chemistry Laboratory where a variety of materials are chemically analyzed quickly and accurately, the Sedimentology Laboratory for routine textural analysis of archaeological soils and sediments, the Palaeobotany Laboratory to study plant remains from archaeological sites (a technique of pollen analysis helps to relate the find to a specific phase in the development of the local sequence of forest growth and thus places it in a time scale), the Palaeoanthropology Laboratory where the skeletal biology of an archaeological population is studied, the Palaeontology Laboratory where the identification and preservation of vertebrate fossils as well as taxonomic and evolutionary studies are done, and the Archaeozoology Laboratory for the study of animal remains retrieved from the site of excavations.

### Pioneering efforts

Among the Deccan College's distinguished scholars was Dr. H.D. Sankalia who taught archaeology and history. During excavations, he involved both his students and the local people in archaeology and the rich heritage of India. He gave popular lectures and

wrote articles in English, Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi newspapers to familiarize the general reader with the subjects. He urged historians to play their part in the national life.

Dr. Sankalia's most spectacular discovery was proving the existence of the Palaeolithic man in the Kashmir Valley. He found convincing evidence of stone tools at Pahelgaon which he dated to the first inter-glacial period, about 500,000 years ago. His thoroughness at interpreting excavations which reconstructed the past has been a boon to India.

Dr. Sankalia was a man of discipline. On excavations, he would be ready by 6 a.m. even in the freezing cold of Rajasthan. He would work hard through the day and after dinner at 7 p.m., everyone would listen to his recording of the antiquities. He would tell the story of each piece, its antiquity and function. He encouraged students to think and educate themselves. On excavations he took school children happily around, explaining to them the significance of various artefacts. Destruction of ancient sites and smuggling of antiquities saddened him. For his pioneering endeavours he was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1974, among other accolades and professional honours which he had received.

Dr. Sankalia orchestrated the careful sifting of information, its logical collation and conclusion to detail the transition of man in India from the prehistoric Stone Age through the Bronze Age, characterized by the Indus Valley Civilization, and onto the Iron Age. He drew

his conclusions from the work done at different sites in the country.

Faculty members and students of the department have undertaken exploration throughout the country. Apart from the Archaeological Survey of India, this is the only department in the country to have to its credit many excavations. Some of the important sites excavated are:

(a) Palaeolithic (150,000 B.C.) and Mesolithic (5,000 B.C.) period—Chirki-Nevasa (Maharashtra), Hungsi (Karnataka), Bhimbetka (Madhya Pradesh), Kurnool Caves (Andhra Pradesh), Langhnaj (Saurashtra, Gujarat), Bagor (Rajasthan).

(b) Neolithic (3,500 B.C.) and Chalcolithic period—Sanganakallu, Tekkalakota (Karnataka), Nevasa, Chandoli, Jorwe, Navadatoli (Maharashtra).

(c) Megalithic period—Mahurjhari, Naikund, Khairwada, Bhagimohari (Maharashtra).

(d) Early Historic period—Dwarka (Gujarat) and Tripuri (Madhya Pradesh).

(e) Medieval period—Daulatabad (Maharashtra).

In 1984, the Ford Foundation gave \$2,10,000 to depute young scientists for advanced training in the United States of America and Europe, and for senior teachers to participate in international conferences, and to acquire sophisticated scientific equipment and library support. The same year, the Foundation gave another grant of \$1,30,000 for acquiring a computer system, making it the only institute in the country with the facility for computer-aided research in archaeology. This

has helped in the study of Stone Age tools, designs of Chalcolithic painted pottery and so on. The University Grants Commission Centre for Advanced Studies in Archaeology, the only such centre in the country, has been set up at the Deccan College.

## Linguistics

The Department of Linguistics has undertaken a number of projects in Indo-Aryan languages, Dravidian languages, historical linguistics and phonetics and also in Vedic language, literature, mythology, religion and ritual. The Rig Veda and the Atharva Veda have been studied thoroughly.

In 1948, the Sanskrit Dictionary Project was undertaken. It involved compiling a Sanskrit Dictionary on historical principles based on citations from classical works. It was planned to produce a 20-volume set. So far, five volumes have been produced, which have been hailed by Sanskrit scholars worldwide. This effort has provided a valuable scriptorium of one crore slips of citations and 15 lakh slips of extracts from previously compiled lexicons. Studies in Sanskrit lexicography have developed side by side.

The Department also worked on a Marathi Dictionary which includes words from the earliest appearance of Marathi to the modern forms of modern literature. Colloquial words and expressions, terms from important dialects, information about



pronunciation and etymology, history and description of the language are provided in a systematic manner.

A Phonetics Laboratory facilitates instrumental work on articulatory and acoustic phonetics (the study of vocal sounds), and on the analysis of music. There is also a Language Laboratory of 15 positions. Each booth in the laboratory has a headphone, microphone and facilities for the audio-recording of programmes. The instructor can provide lessons from five sources of programmes. A student can also work independently using a pre-recorded tape. The teacher can monitor the performance of any student and also involve him in a teacher-controlled conversation. The laboratory is used for practical lessons in phonetics, both for teaching and self-study. There is a library of many phonograph-record language courses and more such material to aid the study of language.

The Anthropology and Sociology Department was transferred to the University campus in the mid-1970s. The Department has conducted investigations in palaeoanthropology, biological anthropology, social and cultural anthropology and sociology. Palaeo-anthropological studies helped discover details of the physical features of prehistoric populations of western and southern India. Investigations into the kinship and social organization and anthropometric studies of different castes were conducted. In sociology, modern sociological theories and structural-functional methodologies were applied to the Indian context.

## Museums

The museums of the Deccan College are of great interest to the scholar and layman alike.

The Archaeological Museum encompasses ten galleries dealing with prehistory, Chalcolithic period, Megalithic period, early history, medieval period, sculpture, epigraphy, numismatics, science in archaeology and ethnoarchaeology.

In the gallery dedicated to Dr. Sankalia, there is a huge wall display showing the various soil layers at which different types of pottery, stone tools, so on, were found, and indicating the burial practices over time. These are pottery sarcophagi containing bones, as was the burial practice. Burial pottery often have special black and red markings to distinguish them. The museum has open shelves in a passageway displaying pots that are hundreds of years old.

The museum also has original collections of Stone Age tools, pottery and other objects of the Chalcolithic and historic period that were recovered by the Deccan College from its excavations. There are Stone Age tools, pottery and other objects from England, Europe, Africa, Australia, Iraq, Turkey and Baluchistan, which facilitate a comparative study of civilizations.

The Numismatic Gallery has a stack of narrow drawers. When a drawer is pulled out, one sees the coins displayed between glass sheets. Information about the coins is provided alongside.

All the galleries provide interesting insights. Looking at the tiny flint tools, one wonders about the early man's life as he struggled for survival against nature. His slow evolution truly surprises us.

The Maratha History Museum houses objects from medieval and modern period in the history of the Deccan. It has a valuable collection of 10,000 documents of the eighteenth century, chronicles, ambassadors' reports, battle documents, MaCartney papers (papers relating to the correspondence of the family of Nana Phadnavis, an important political figure in Maratha history) and several rare books in Marathi, Persian, Urdu and English, maps, plans and paintings, swords and weapons, and coins. The original Satara Museum collection and the Jamkhindi collection of exhibits are here. There is a good deal of data available for those who would like to undertake work in Maratha history.

## **Publications**

The Deccan College has published over 200 books and monographs covering its research activity. Its annual bulletin also records the research activity of the members of the staff and students. The bulletin contains reviews, critical surveys and abstracts of theses. Outsiders also contribute articles.

The college library has a collection of over one lakh books. It receives 400 periodicals, of which 240 are from

abroad. One can find material on almost any subject relating to Indian history and art. The books are very well-indexed and the staff are cordial even to the casual reader, making it a very satisfying trip into the world of books.

Many distinguished scholars have worked hard in the college to contribute immensely to the study of Indian heritage. Edwin Arnold, author of *Light of Asia*, was one of the early principals of the college. William Wordsworth Jr., the grandson of the English poet, was the principal in 1870. Sardar Dastur Hoshang, the great Parsi Iranian scholar, R.G. Bhandarkar, a renowned Orientalist, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the national leader, studied here. Among the host of distinguished scholars who have taught at Deccan College are H. D. Sankalia, Dr. Iravati Karve (anthropology) and Dr. S.M. Katre (linguistics).

The college offers scholarships to students.

The college keeps pace with developments in archaeological research, in both theoretical and field aspects, taking place in India and abroad. It is a pioneer in archaeology and related areas, giving India's past a future.

# Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute

By  
Kanta S. Paul Dhawan

**A**T A time when the world is being threatened by loss of values and divisive forces, there is one institution in India which can provide the bonds for cultural and emotional integration—the Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute.

This institute is a haven for those interested in the Indological studies related to language, literature, history, philosophy and religion, arts, science and culture. Scholars doing research work come here from all over India and abroad.

The V.V.R.I., as it is popularly known, is nestled in the foothills of the Shivalik range, on the outskirts of Hoshiarpur in Punjab. The backdrop of the majestic Himalayas adds to the grandeur and natural scenic beauty of the institute.

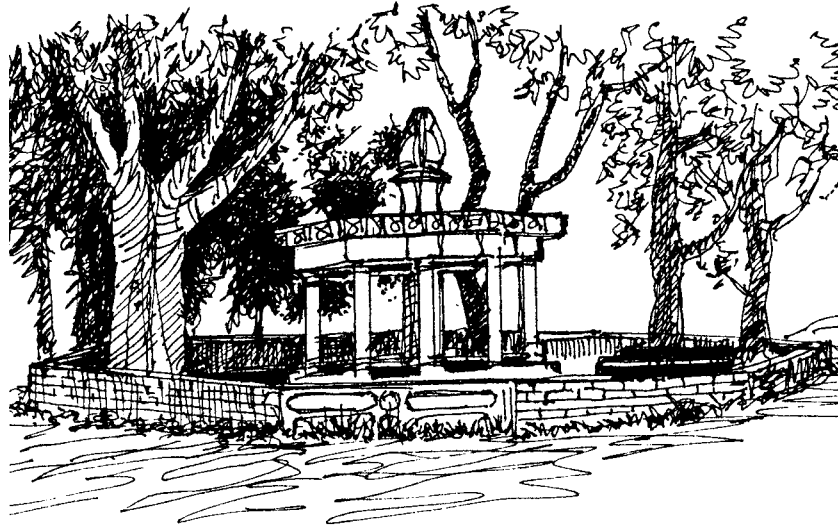
Its ten-acre campus area—known as the Sadhu Ashram—has well-laid-out gardens, lawns and buildings surrounded by green fields and fruit gardens. The wooded surroundings, with small, seasonal streams and rivulets, are calm and

peaceful—an ideal atmosphere for serious study and for research work.

## History

The history of the V.V.R.I. is punctuated by upheavals, challenges and unusual situations. It was first set up at Shant Kuti, Shimla, in 1903, as a small private office for the preparation of a Vedic lexicon.

Its founders, Swami Nityanand and Swami Vishveshvaranand, had realized that the changes in terms and usage of words in languages with the passage of time made it almost impossible to



Pancha Vati—Five sacred trees planted by the educationists

comprehend the Vedas and other Sanskrit texts. It was not easy to understand the complexity of the language and the hidden meanings in the texts.

Western scholars had developed a novel and scientific method for the comparative study of the Vedas. A prominent German scholar, H. Grassmann, had prepared a book in German, *Worterbuch zum Rgveda*, the English rendering of which is 'Dictionary on Rig Veda'. This gave an insight into the various meanings of each word in the Rig Veda.

Swami Nityanand and Swami Vishveshvaranand worked on these lines and by 1910, they were able to prepare Alphabetical Indices to all the four Vedas. In 1914, Swami Nityanand passed away. However, Swami Vishveshvaranand continued the work.

In 1917, the Lal Chand Memorial Library of Books and Manuscripts along with the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (D.A.V.) College Research Department was established by the D.A.V. Society and it became a part of the V.V.R.I. from June 1, 1934 onwards when Acharya Vishva Bandhu became Director of the said library and the Research Department.

In 1918, the Holkar Darbar (the erstwhile princely state of Holkar, the capital of which was Indore) offered to finance the work done by Swami Vishveshvaranand, and the office was shifted from Shimla to Indore.

Five years later, Swami Vishveshvaranand decided to reorganize the institute and run it as a regular,

privately-managed, voluntary institute of purely non-sectarian and universal nature. The office was once again shifted from Indore to Lahore (now in Pakistan). At that time, the centre of the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic institutions and Arya Samaj followers was also at Lahore.

Acharya Vishva Bandhu was the first Director of the institute after it shifted to Lahore. The V.V.R.I. started functioning on January 1, 1924, with a wider scope of work and even more challenges. After five years of tireless striving, a few papers on Sanskrit words, their grammatical notes, meanings and explanations in Sanskrit, Hindi and English were published. These were highly appreciated in India and abroad.



Acharya Vishva Bandhu

As the work expanded, the popularity and influence of the institute and its Director also rose. Funds started pouring in. Acharya Vishva Bandhu, who had topped the University in B.A. (Hons.), M.A. and 'Shastri' examinations and had broken all the University records, was offered an all-India scholarship for higher studies abroad in 1928. He declined this offer because of the influence of the non-cooperation movement started by Mahatma Gandhi and because of his dedication to the research work at the V.V.R.I. and the D.A.V. institutions.

Prominent personalities like Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mahatma Hans Raj, Lala Mul Raj, Lala Lajpat Rai, Sain Das, Bhai Parmanand, Mehr Chand Mahajan, Dewan Anand Kumar, G.L. Datta, and Prof. Ved Vyas extended their cooperation to Acharya Vishva Bandhu's 'labour of love'. By 1938, the team of volunteers, life members and associate members and dedicated workers had started growing.

The publishing work and printing requirements of the institute increased. In 1939, the institute set up a printing press to publish its research papers. They had an objective of releasing the Rosary of 108 research papers by November 3, 1947 (the day V.V.R.I. came to be in its present Sadhu Ashram Campus at Hoshiarpur). It is considered as the re-settlement day of the V.V.R.I.

The Government of India sanctioned grants for the pursuit of the institute's work in 1940-41. Rich and affluent individuals, many State Governments,

Rajas and Maharajas contributed liberally to the cause. Funds came in from the members, who were increasing in number every year.

## Dislocation

In spite of the partition of India, Acharya Vishva Bandhu and his associates felt no threat to their work as its nature was non-political and philosophically universal. In the hope of continuing their work after the anarchical conditions were brought under control, they declared vacation for the staff of the Lal Chand Memorial Library and the volunteers and workers of the institution from August 17, 1947.

When the staff left, the Acharya had only Pandit Dev Datt Shastri, Pandit Raghunath Shastri, Pandit Parmanand Shastri and Ved Prakash Vidyavachaspati with him. When the situation showed no signs of returning to normalcy, they decided to shift the institute from Lahore.

Before them was the gigantic task of carrying the thousands and thousands of priceless and irreplaceable books, manuscripts, research papers, and academic and administrative records of the institute bodily out of Lahore. They applied to the Pakistan Government to allow them to leave Lahore with the material as their work was purely literary and research-based. Permission was denied, and they got a letter stating that the library, papers and

manuscripts, research work and the other assets of the institute were now the property of the Pakistan Government and that they had to hand over the charge of all these to the principal of a local Government College.

The Acharya and his four associates started their seemingly impossible work of packing, piece by piece, the material in huge sacks. Providence seemed to favour them, for neither were they detected by the Pakistan Government nor did anyone come to claim the charge from them. When all the 4,000 *maunds* (about 36 kg each) of material had been packed in nearly 1,000 sacks, they were faced with an even more risky task of taking them out of Pakistan. It was not possible to do so openly and they had to board the sacks secretly into trucks carrying Hindu refugees to India under army protection. This way they could hardly remove five to ten sacks a day.

It was a veritable miracle that did occur. They were able to convince the officials, involved in moving the refugees from Lahore to Amritsar, about the genuineness of their cause and the importance of the papers and other material. The officials agreed to help them.

Thus they managed to shift the whole load to Amritsar, intact and undetected. They suffered a loss of more than Rs. 15 lakhs, in the form of the building, printing press and other material assets.

Once the institute's material was saved, they started anew the hunt for a new and suitable site for the

re-establishment of the institute. This was still a great problem, for the whole country was passing through a very serious crisis.

## Re-establishment

It was in this hour of crisis that Lala Dhani Ram Bhalla offered his help. A relative of Mahatma Hans Raj, he had been deeply influenced by the great leader and social reformer. It is said that Dhani Ram Bhalla was the first ever Hindu to have a shoe-shop that he had set up at Lahore. Before this it was looked down upon as a lowly profession by the Hindus. But the moral support of Mahatma Hans Raj and other social reformers, who believed in a classless society, gave him the courage to take this bold step, and he made plenty of money in this trade.

Dhani Ram Bhalla suggested that the institute be set up in Hoshiarpur and offered the Sadhu Ashram which he owned.

The scenic beauty, the calm and peaceful surroundings, a healthy climate throughout the year, and the inspiring Himalayas in the background, were the perfect setting for the work of the V.V.R.I.

So Acharya Vishva Bandhu restarted the work with greater fervour and enthusiasm from November 1947.

There were very few rooms, and they looked like the *kutias* (huts) of the ancient rishis, saints

and ascetics. As the need increased, more rooms and blocks were constructed.

In 1950, when Dhani Ram Bhalla passed away without formally having given the Ashram and its property to the V.V.R.I., once again there seemed to be a crisis of existence. His wife and sons donated the place to the V.V.R.I. in 1956.

The institute restarted work soon after its re-establishment at Sadhu Ashram. By the close of 1949, the institute had set up its new press at the Ashram. The publication of the *Brahm Vidya* by Swami Krishnanand in March 1950, and of *Siddha Bharati*, the Rosary of Indology, in August, marked the auspicious commencement of the working of the press.

In 1957, the Punjab University established a department at the V.V.R.I. for Manuscriptological Research. This department of Punjab University at the V.V.R.I. was known as the Devanagari Transcription and Research Department. In 1959, the V.V.R.I. started its post-graduate teaching by running M.A. (Sanskrit) classes for which it was duly affiliated to the Punjab University.

With the passage of time, the institute's field of work expanded and facilities for the same also increased.

Its Research and Cultural Departments have turned out both scholarly and cultural works on Vedic literature and lexicography, linguistics and allied sciences, critical text editing, history, philosophy and

religion, bibliography and general Indological research.

The Sanskrit and Hindi College of the institute has been conducting M.A., Acharya, Shastri and Visharad classes in Sanskrit and Prabhakar classes in Hindi.

The institute started the publication of its periodicals, namely, the cultural Hindi monthly, *Vishva Jyoti*, a biannual English research organ, *Vishveshvaranand Indological Journal*, and a Sanskrit quarterly *Vishva-Sanskritam*.

## Library

The institute's library has nearly one lakh printed books and papers, 10,000 ancient manuscripts including 4,000 manuscripts on palm leaves in various South Indian scripts. This is the largest Indological reference unit in north-west India.

A reading room is attached to the library and is provided regularly with about 200 papers and periodicals.

The Archaeological Museum housed in the library building contains a rich collection of Harappan sculptures and relics (in original and in cast) and paintings and photographs of archaeological monuments from all over India. This museum, which is a valuable addition to the existing facilities available at the institute for studies in Indian history and culture, was inaugurated by the

then Vice-President of India, G.S. Pathak, on November 7, 1971.

The Sales Department of the institute, known as the Vishveshvaranand Book Agency, arranges for the distribution of all the priced publications of the institute. It also meets its customers' demands for the supply of various types of books from other publishers. It issues, periodically, a complete catalogue of the institute's publications as well as others that may be available.

The V.V.R.I. press runs on professional lines. It caters efficiently to the constant voluminous publication works of the institute and to the requirements of other educational institutions which give it regular printing jobs.

So far the institute has published over 900 research and popular works in Sanskrit, Hindi and Punjabi relating to various branches of Indology. The institute has won universal recognition by sheer virtue of its volume and standard.

The strength of the V.V.R.I. staff is modest, including one Director Professor and two Professors Emeritus.

The present running expenditure of the V.V.R.I. is about Rs. 22 lakhs per annum. All donations to the institute are exempted from Income Tax under the Income Tax Act, 1961.

The institute is run by the V.V.R.I. Society registered under the Societies Act XXI of 1860, and is secular in its character, non-denominational and independent in its constitution. The affairs of this institute are managed



and administered by an Executive Board, with 26 members.

From July 1, 1965, the Punjab University became responsible for the maintenance and development of the institute as its main centre for Sanskrit and Indological studies.

The Vishveshvaranand Institute of Sanskrit and Indological Studies (V.I.S. & I.S.) was founded on July 1, 1965, by the Punjab University on the V.V.R.I. premises by taking over certain departments which included the Department of Post-Graduate Teaching.

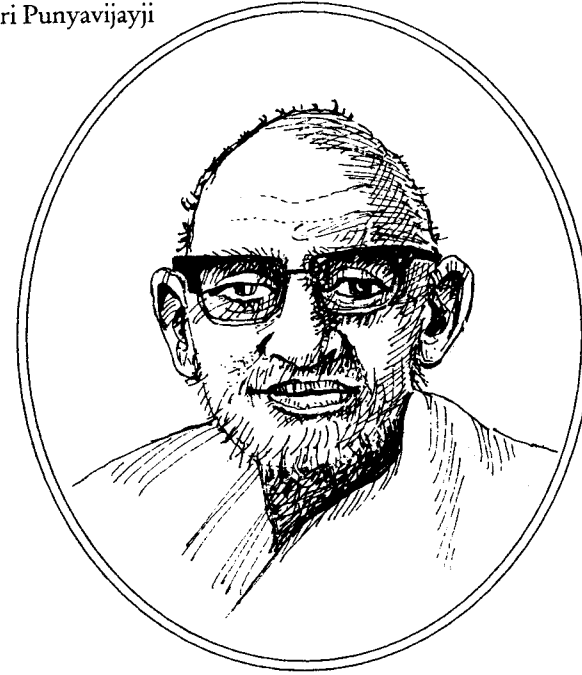
Acharya Vishva Bandhu remained the Honorary Director of the V.V.R.I. and the V.I.S. & I.S. After his demise on August 1, 1973, the Punjab University renamed the V.I.S. & I.S. as Vishveshvaranand Vishva Bandhu Institute of Sanskrit and Indological Studies, in recognition of the services rendered by the Acharya. After the Acharya, S. Bhaskaran Nair became the Director of both the V.V.R.I. and the V.V.B.I.S. & I.S. for about three years.

From time to time dignitaries and learned scholars from India and abroad have visited this institute and have been entranced by the scenic beauty, the vast treasure of knowledge, the smooth functioning of the institute and the devotion of its volunteers.

The V.V.R.I. continues to be the foremost centre of Indological research in the country and has gained a world-wide reputation for unparalleled work on Indian culture and Vedic studies.

# Lalbhair Dalpatbhair Institute of Indology

By  
Minakshi Bharatkumar Thakar



**I**T WAS the year 1950. A 55-year-old Jain sadhu was on his way to Jaisalmer on foot. It was a dark night. Accidentally, he stumbled on a deep culvert, but escaped unhurt. He took rest for some time and started walking again.

The sadhu was Munishri Punyavijayji. He was known as *Agamaprabhakar* (illuminator of the canon) because he was a renowned scholar of Prakrit, Sanskrit and old Gujarati. It had come to his notice that a great treasure of handwritten manuscripts were scattered at a number of places, particularly in Rajasthan and Gujarat. This was getting destroyed owing to ignorance and indifference. Munishri decided to collect and preserve this cultural treasure of our ancient knowledge. He realized it would be a great boon for scholars, for the common man and for anybody interested in Indian heritage.

Punyavijayji knew how difficult and strenuous the work was. He travelled to the nook and corner of Rajasthan and Gujarat. He met people and found out where such manuscripts were. He realized that there

were innumerable such manuscripts with individuals, institutions, trusts and Jain *bhandars* (stores). He knew that hardly any adequate care was being taken of the manuscripts. Besides, people did not know how to take care of such old manuscripts. The manuscripts were facing the danger of irreparable damage, and needed careful preservation and cataloguing.

Punyavijayji, therefore, made it his life's mission to ensure that this priceless heritage was properly preserved, studied and made available to scholars. With this objective in mind, he scientifically reorganized several *bhandars* and catalogued their collections. Moreover, he acquired numerous manuscripts from

these places where proper facilities for their preservation were not available. As the collection grew, he became increasingly aware of the need for a suitable place to house these rare manuscripts.

### Inception

Kasturbhai Lalbhai, an industrialist and philanthropist, was perhaps the last of the chain of Shresthis-Mahajans known for their noble philanthropic traditions in the country. Kasturbhai had a passion to preserve and promote Indian culture and tradition. He was a man of rare foresight, with wide-ranging interests. He had been instrumental in promoting and establishing educational, cultural and religious institutions.

Kasturbhai was a devout Jain and had great regard for Munishri. He expressed his desire to help Punyavijayji in his mission. Munishri suggested setting up an institution where manuscripts could be preserved and be made available for research.

During this time, a great scholar, Pandit Sukhlalji, was conferred with the degree of D. Litt. for his work in the field of linguistics and Prakrit studies. On this occasion he requested the wealthy Jains to spend their money for keeping and preserving our ancient treasure, besides spending money in buildings and temples. He advised them to help the scholars in research work, and save the ancient culture from sinking.

Acting on the advice of the two scholars, Kasturbhai

founded the Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology on the auspicious day of *Vijayadashami* in 1957 at Ahmedabad.

From its inception, the institute attracted outstanding scholars in the field of Indological studies. The great freedom fighter and Gandhian philosopher and scholar, Muni Jinavijayji, and distinguished critics of Indian art and architecture like Madhusudan Dhaky, Padmanabh Jaini, R. Mehta and Umakantbhai Shah were associated with the institute. They contributed immensely to the shaping of the institute and its museum.

For the first two years, the work of the institute went on very slowly. Munishri Punyavijayji was not satisfied with the progress. He was in search of someone suited to the special task who could immerse himself in this activity. He invited Pandit Dalsukhbhai Malvania, a teacher at Varanasi. Pandit Malvania was reluctant, but was finally persuaded to come to Ahmedabad and he became the Director of the institute in 1959 for 16 years. From 1976 to 1988, he served as an Adviser to the institute.

Kasturbhai and his family supported the institute with a handsome donation. In the last three decades, the Lalbhai Dalpatbhai family and associated corporate bodies have contributed as much as Rs. 80 lakhs to the institute. About half this amount has been spent on land and buildings, and the rest on providing facilities for study, research and as working capital for running the institute and the museum.



Munishri Punyavijayji gifted his treasure of over 10,000 rare valuable manuscripts, many of which are illustrated, to this institute. He later donated over 7,000 rare books too. This collection proved to be the nucleus of the institute.

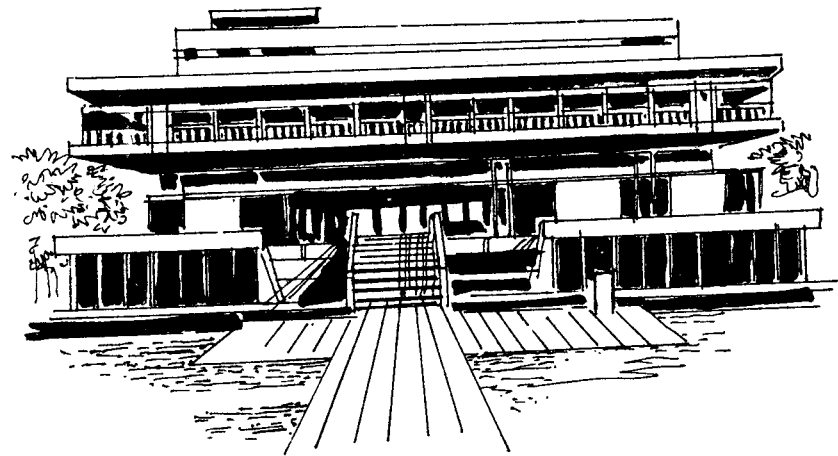
With the arrival of Dalsukhbhai Malvania, the institute's activities expanded. The storage place for the manuscripts was found to be too small. It was necessary to shift the institute into new premises. Kasturbhai took the responsibility of constructing a suitably-designed building for the preservation of manuscripts and other objects of art, setting up of a library and the overall management.

## Objectives

In the proximity of the Gujarat University, an area of 33,000 square yards of land was purchased and an aesthetically beautiful building designed by an inter-nationally reputed architect, B.V. Doshi, was constructed. It was inaugurated by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1963.

The main objectives of the Institute of Indology are:

- to collect and preserve ancient manuscripts so that the invaluable treasures of the past are not lost to posterity;
- to provide facilities to scholars for study and research in Indology; and
- to undertake publication of critical editions of unpublished manuscripts and the outcome of research and study undertaken by scholars.



Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology

The institute is recognized by the Gujarat University as a research centre for promoting doctoral and post-doctoral studies in Sanskrit, Prakrit and ancient culture. A well-equipped reference library is at the disposal of research scholars and others.

The Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology is unique among such institutions. Similar institutes in Jodhpur, called Rajasthan Puratatvan Veshan Temple, and in Benares, called Parshwanath Vidhyastambh, also have sizeable collections. These institutes are completely under the control of the Rajasthan and the Uttar Pradesh Governments respectively. The institute at Ahmedabad is privately run, supported by philanthropists, with the purpose of preserving Indian culture. Gujarat is known for institutes of education and culture which are backed by Shresthis. The institute gets grants from the Government, but does not work on the government methods. Even today, the Kasturbhai family is at the back of the institute to sustain its aims and objectives.

The institute has in its possession a rich collection of nearly 75,000 rare manuscripts. The collection covers a wide range of subjects, such as the Vedas, the *Agamas*, *Tantras*, Jaina Darshana, systems of Indian philosophy, grammar, prosody, poetics, lexicography, medicine, so on. These are in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsa, old Gujarati, old Hindi and old Rajasthani. A substantial number carry colour illustrations.

The precious manuscripts in the institute include Yajur Veda, Shakaracharya's 'Tripuri Upanishad',

Bhaguri's 'Smriti Samuchchaya', Rangavijaya's 'Gurjardesha Rajavamshavali', 'Bauddhadi-panchadarshan', Ramchandra's 'Mahavidyalankara', Ruchidatta's commentary on 'Tattavachintamani-Chintamani-Subodhika', Rajashekhara's 'Nyayakandalipanjika', Gopikanta's 'Nyayadiap', commentaries on *Kumarasambhava*, *Kirata*, *Raghuvamsha*, 'Yavana-nama-mala' of Soma Mantri's son, Khimsagar's 'Pashchimandhisha Chhanda' in Persian, 'Vilasa-vatinatika', 'Suragachandrodaya', 'Pharasiprakash' (dictionary), 'Yadusundara', 'Rajimati Prabhandhantaka', 'Vivekamanjari Sitacharita', 'Yogani Bandh', and 'Rama Shataka Hansanidhan'.

Some of the rare illustrated manuscripts in the institute are 'Shalihotradi' with 128 illustrations of horses, 'Vyayamachantamani' illustrating different poses of physical exercises, 'Meghaduta' (only one such manuscript known until now), 'Uttaradhyayana': 'Upadeshmala', 'Kalpasutra', 'Kumarasambhava', 'Gujasthambha' having 42 illustrations of elephants, 'Badashahichitravali' illustrating the Muslim kings, 'Gajachakra-Ashvachakra' having 50 illustrations, 'Madhumalati', 'Dholamaru' having 65 illustrations, 'Gita Govinda', and 'Tulsi Ramayana'.

In addition to books on poetry, drama, *rasa*, and *chopai*, there are books on astrology, astronomy, metallurgy and Ayurveda. The oldest manuscript in this collection is 'Karaksambandhodyol', which was copied in 1286. The palm-leaf manuscript is 'Buddha Grantha Dhamottar Tippanial' of Vikram Samvat 1116.

Moreover, this institute has about 2,000 micro-films of the palm-leaf manuscript rolls of Jaisalmer, Patan, Khambhat, Pune. They have about 5,000 transparencies of illustrated manuscripts in various treasure collections, 1,000 picture photos and 5,000 film rolls.

## Preservation

Scientific preservation methods have been adopted and applied for preserving old handwritten manuscripts.

Formerly the manuscripts were wrapped in silken cloth and stored in steel cupboards. The wrapped manuscripts were put into plastic bags.

On suggestion from the National Archives of India, specially prepared airtight bags made of pure teak-wood are now used to store these manuscripts. Along with it menthol and peradyclatorobenzine pills are kept. These bags are kept in specially prepared cupboards of 21-gauge thickness and painted with heat-process. The manuscripts are protected from heat and moisture.

There are three types of manuscripts. Some are on paper, some are on *tadpatra* (palm leaf) and some on *bhojpatra* (bark of birch tree). The methods of preservation are more or less the same. There are three important factors in preserving the manuscripts:

a. Preservation: Every object has a specific lifespan. Even so if proper care is taken, it can have a longer life.

b. Conservation: In spite of preservation methods, if the original identity of manuscripts is

marred, it can be saved by chemical application.

c. Restoration: In case of some loss of matter from the manuscripts, the missing link can be found—the faded colours can be repainted or the drawing lines can be redrawn, so that the page of the manuscript resembles the original.

Antiquities in the institute's possession include sculptures in metal and stone, woodwork, copper plates, *vijnipati patras*, *patas* and paintings, some of them dating back to the second century B.C. A sandstone Yaksha, an unidentified red sandstone Jataka, a mottled Shiva-Parvati of sandstone, and a bronze Adinatha, are some of the rare objects of art amongst the institute's collection.

## Library

The institute has a rich collection of over 40,000 books on Indology and other related subjects, including some very valued books which are not available elsewhere.

The institute receives scholarly magazines from all over the country and abroad. Any student of Indian culture can use this library, free of charge. Scholars from abroad too are supplied with information. The photocopies of the manuscripts and books needed by them are sent to them at a nominal charge.

The institute has to its credit a number of unique publications. Its educational activities are also significant. The institute gives guidance to doctoral

students of Sanskrit, Prakrit, Indian philosophy, Indian culture, so on. It gives guidance to foreign students in the field of Oriental arts. Many students from India and abroad have been awarded Ph.Ds. The manuscripts of the institute are edited by its own experts. The institute brings out a quarterly, *Sambhodhi*. Research articles, criticism, glossaries are published therein.

The manuscript department has published a list of about 12,000 manuscripts of Sanskrit and Prakrit. An index of about 6,700 manuscripts in old Gujarati from the collection of Munishri Punyavijayji is also published.

## Museum

The collection of art objects of the Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology, and the art consciousness of the people of Ahmedabad have grown simultaneously in recent years. As a result, the need for a permanent museum was increasingly felt. Recognizing this fact, the Managing Board of the institute decided to build a museum adjacent to it. Though there are many museums in Gujarat, and at least ten in Ahmedabad alone, the Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Museum has exhibits that are internationally known and are placed on permanent display for the general public.

The varied collection on show predominantly comprises illustrated Jain manuscripts, miniature

paintings, painted scrolls, letters of invitation, embroidered textiles, stone and metal sculptures, bronzes, woodwork and miscellaneous pieces of decorative art, collected by Munishri Punyavijayji and by the Kasturbhai family. A substantial collection of early non-Jain sculptures and woodwork has been added as a bequest from the late Madhuri Desai of Mumbai, for which the ground floor gallery has been used.

On the first floor two new sections have been added. The first is a rare collection of assorted coins presented in showcases and the second is a teaching gallery of the Indus Valley culture, specially installed, keeping in view the urgent need of the students. The gallery is regularly used as a teaching aid by visiting school groups.

In addition to the above, a sizeable collection of paintings and prints by Rabindranath Tagore, Gaganendranath Tagore and by others and miscellaneous antiques belonging to a few eminent personalities have been added as a long-term loan through the Ahmedabad Education Society. The items loaned by a number of Jain *bhandars* from Ahmedabad and other institutions from Gujarat, have enriched the entire collection of the museum.

A special extension wing is being added to the existing museum building to house the world-famous N.C. Mehta Collection of miniature paintings, previously housed in a hall at the Sanskar Kendra at Paldi, Ahmedabad.

N.C. Mehta was one of the pioneers in the field of

Indian miniature painting. A member of Indian Civil Service, N.C. Mehta was an art lover and had a sound background of Sanskrit and Hindi literature. He published his researches through several books and articles and brought to light many new documents of Indian paintings, like the Vasanta Vilasa scroll and the *Chaurapanchasika* series of paintings, all a part of the N.C. Mehta Collection. After his demise in May 1958, his collection was donated to the Gujarat Museum Society, Ahmedabad.

The N.C. Mehta Collection consists of more than 1,000 famous miniature paintings. It has a large collection of Pahari paintings which include some of the masterpieces of Basholi, Nurpur, Kangra, Guler, Kulu-Mandi and other schools. Among the pre-Akbari paintings, the surviving set of *Chaurapanchasika* is the only example of Sultanate-style paintings in the world. The rest of the collection is rich in Rajasthani and Deccani paintings, which include the schools of Mewar, Marwar, Bundi, Kota, Bikaner, Malwa, Central India and many others. The exhibition was housed at the Sanskar Kendra from 1960 to 1991. However, it was found that some of the paintings had started showing signs of ageing, perhaps owing to the surrounding environment. It was therefore shifted to the Indian Institute of Indology.

A new wing has been designed to minimize some of the problems that face Indian museums today. Due consideration has been given to security of objects and lighting. The intensity of lights is controlled to avoid

its ill-effects and the display is reoriented to suit the new premises.

The institute has to its credit over 115 publications. Some of the items such as, the treasures of Jain *bhandars*, the *Ramayana* in Pahari Miniature Paintings and Aspects of Jain Art and Architecture are widely acclaimed.

The collection of antiquities at the Dalpatbhai Museum includes the *firman* of Jahangir on paper depicting the declaration of non-killing of animals during Jain festivals to honour the policy of tolerance towards other religions.

The museum is looked after by Dr. S.K. Andhare, formerly associated with the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, and his colleague, Lalit Kumar, formerly associated with Bharat Kala Bhavan.

### Valuable service

The institute guides students for doctoral and post-doctoral studies. In the last 35 years it has successfully helped many students in their research work.

The institute has many academic activities such as holding lectures of renowned scholars on various subjects of academic and general interest. The forum under which such interdisciplinary lectures are arranged is known as 'Sangosthi', and it has organized as many as 80 lectures.



The institute also conducts exhibitions, public lectures, seminars, symposia and audio-visual programmes on subjects related to Indological research. Art historian Karl J. Khandalavala, author Mulk Raj Anand, museologist S.V. Gorakshakar and other dignitaries have visited the institute and the museum and given illuminating discourses. The Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Museum, which is a part and parcel of this institute, has developed its own auditorium for slide-shows, exhibitions and lectures. The museum arranges educational as well as popular exhibitions of paintings and sculptures.

The institute provides photocopies of the rare manuscripts, photographs, micro-films of the rare antiquities for researchers. Throughout the year the research scholars from various institutions in the country and abroad contact the centre for this facility.

The Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology continues to collect and preserve ancient manuscripts and provide facilities to scholars for their studies. It also undertakes publication of critical editions of unpublished manuscripts and new researches. So far the institute has been successfully carrying out varied activities. In the past four decades the institute has not only earned the distinction of being a nodal Indological research institute of Asia, but has established itself as the nucleus of Indological research activities carried out throughout the world.

## SELECT CBT TITLES

FOLK TALES RETOLD

*Shankar*

INDIAN FOLK TALES

STORIES FROM PANCHATANTRA

*Shivkumar*

STORIES OF INDIA

*Mrinalini Sarabhai*

TALES FROM INDIAN CLASSICS

*Retold by Savitri*

TREASURY OF INDIAN TALES

*Shankar*